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EDITORIAL NOTES

THE Society for Pure English, after some years of investigation into the problem of foreign forms in English has issued a first list of recommendations which has been approved and adopted by the Editors of the *Times* and THE LONDON MERCURY. In former days our nation had a great faculty for digesting foreign words which were habitually given English spellings and pronunciations. The age of universal book-education has robbed us of this national faculty: robbery, pedantry, timidity all operate: we fear diversity of practice and accusations of ignorance: and in recent years our journals have become spotted with immigrant alien words in italics, and we have an equally unfortunate habit of mixing them with our speech. We have even gone to the length of denaturalizing words which were long ago naturalized. An example is the French word "*mêlée*," which our fathers turned into "mellay," and which has now lapsed back to French, circumflex and all.

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THE S. P. E. has wisely refrained, at this stage, from recommendations as to pronunciation. It has also begun with a short list as free as possible from words about which there might be reasonable controversy. No recent importation has been included, and no word which is not almost certain to remain permanently in use here. Nor have the recommendations—since a general assent to the changes might be risked by radical innovations—gone to the lengths which some people might desire with regard to the anglicisation of spellings. "Rendez-vous" is absurd as an English spelling and comes with it the certainty that we shall go on pronouncing it in a French way: but the Society

leaves the spelling intact and merely recommends the abandonment of the customary italics. Beyond italics and accents nothing is changed in *débris*, *dénouement*, *dépôt*, *détour*, *levée*, *provenance*, *séance*, *nuance*, *plébiscite* and *rôle*. *Régime* might well have been added to this list of commonly used words. "Employee" and "intransigent" (both semi-established forms) are recommended instead of *employé* and *intransigeant* who can question these?



"E" for "æ" in "coeval," "mediæval," "primæval" and "pæony" (the last a deplorable reversion after "peony" had been generally accepted) may offend some conservatives, but we trust that they will reconcile themselves. A few Latin and Italian plurals (e.g. "banditti," "lacunæ," "vortices") are to be abandoned; unless we discourage people from talking about "sanatoria" and "gymnasia" they will soon be following in the wicked wake of the journalist whom we recently found using the plural "musea." It is suggested that "foci," "formulæ" and "indices" should be retained in their scientific sense but not otherwise, and that "automata" and "memoranda" should only remain when the plural is used collectively. This last may put a heavy strain on minds not accustomed to such grammatical discrimination.



SEVERAL important firms of printers and publishers have already indicated their intention of adopting these reforms bodily. More cannot well be proposed until these have been carried thoroughly into effect. We urge authors, publishers and printers who read these lines to co-operate in the campaign. The difficulty in the past has been that we have most of us conformed to vicious practices because we felt that separate action by single persons or papers would be ineffective or wear the appearance of a cultivated eccentricity. Compulsion is impossible and only the simultaneous voluntary efforts of influential people can purge our print of these offences and arrest a process which has become very deleterious to the language. Cards containing the complete list of recommendations may be obtained from Mr. L. Pearsall Smith at 11 St Leonard's Terrace, Chelsea; they are of a kind which may conveniently be hung up in offices and printing works. We especially appeal to editors of dailies and publishers who can give instructions regarding their books and thus disseminate the news amongst the large body of printers.



WHEN Mr. Baldwin was Chancellor of the Exchequer we were able heartily to commend him the interest he displayed (openly, in the House) in the design and execution of our coins. We do not

know how far he was active in promoting the recent reforms at the Mint; but the Annual Report of the Deputy Master (Col. R. A. Johnson) for 1922 records very welcome changes. It will be remembered that from time to time we have discussed the question here, urging not only a better coinage but a systematic supervision of our whole output of medals and decorations. A great deal has now been done to secure the improvement for which we asked and it is described in Colonel Johnson's report which reveals an ability and enthusiasm which are likely to result in continued progress with the good work. The quality of the coinage has already been greatly improved. But far more important are the establishment of a Medal Department at the Mint, which will be given the whole work of producing medals and decorations, and the establishment of an Advisory Committee of artists and experts which is being consulted on all matters connected with the designing and preparation of Seals, Coins, Medals and Decorations. There will be no more designs chosen by court-martial, no more Christmas cracker orders, no more medals pounded out of Woolwich Arsenal. One of the outstanding difficulties referred to by Col. Johnson is the scarcity of skilled medallists who cannot be maintained by the Government alone. He suggests, and it is a good suggestion, that the portrait-medal for presentation purposes should be revived.



WE mentioned Mr. Baldwin because one of his last acts as Prime Minister was the establishment of a Commission of Fine Arts for England. The Commission will have no mandatory powers but it is hoped that public authorities and private persons will consult it with regard to such matters as public belongings, parks, statuary and town planning. Lord Crawford, the chairman, is the best possible chairman who could have been found: the other members are Lord Curzon, Sir Aston Webb, Sir Reginald Blomfield, Sir Edwin Lutyens, Mr. J. Alfred Gitch (architects), Mr. D. Y. Cameron (painter), Sir George Frampton (sculptor) and Mr. P. H. Mawson, president of the Town Planning Institute. Discussing this matter two years ago we suggested that such a central committee should (1) be given an opportunity of expressing an opinion on all relevant matters where government departments are responsible and (2) that it should have permanent sub-committees dealing sectionally with questions of aesthetic importance. The Mint Committee—though no relation between it and the Commission of Fine Arts appears yet to have been established—is an example of the kind of thing we mean. Many men have good taste in all the arts when it comes to considering specimens of proposed or finished work, but few have intimate technical knowledge (relating to both processes and persons) of more than one. We observe that the nine members of the Commission have power to

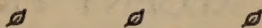
co-opt. We hope they will use these powers freely and co-opt sufficient members to erect competent sub-committees on all the important groups of questions.



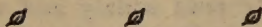
WE lament the death of Arthur Clutton-Brock, a contributor and constant supporter of THE LONDON MERCURY as well as one of the sanest and most humane critics of his day. He was 55, educated at Eton and New College; for ten years a practising barrister; and then a critic of literature and the arts and of the religion which must be behind them all. We shall publish, we hope in our next number, a study of his personality and work.

LITERARY INTELLIGENCE

FORMER members of the Savile Club may be interested in *The Savile Club, 1868-1923*, which has just been privately printed for the Club. The book, which is beautifully produced, contains lists of officers, a chronological list of members from the foundation and, above all, a long, fascinating, amusing and very gracefully written history of the Club, which, during the last half-century, has had as many eminent and interesting persons amongst its members as any such institution in England. It is generally known that the Club, before and after the days of Stevenson and Henley, has been a great resort of writers; its scientific character, less notorious, is impressed by the fact that it has had on its books over 670 Fellows of the Royal Society. Such facts and stories about the chief characters in the Club history are given in this record, which has been publicly stated, and without contradiction, to be the work of Sir Herbert Stephen.



THE last two concerts of the Music Society's Season will be held on February 19th and March 18th, at 5.15, at St. John's Institute, Tufton Street. At the first Jelly d'Aranyi and Myra Hess will give a programme of Violin and Piano Sonatas, and the second will be a String Quartet Meeting. We heartily recommend these concerts to our readers; the Society is not run for profit, and it continually contrives to combine novelty of programme with excellence of execution, new British works being always in the foreground. Smoking is allowed. Enquiries should be addressed to the Secretary, at 21, Creswell Place, S.W. 10.



SIR Frederick Treves died in September, at the age of seventy. He was one of the greatest surgeons of his own, or any, age, and emerged from retirement to perform great services for his country during the war. Of those of his publications that concern intestinal obstruction, etc., we cannot presume to speak, but many readers were delighted by his lay works. He was a real humanist with a charming style. His *Highways and Byways in Dorset* was one of the best books in a good series; his *Elephant Man and Other Stories*, and the three topographical literary books, which were among his last works, were all agreeable and substantial. The strange and moving verses to the memory of a fellow Dorset man which Mr. Thomas Hardy printed in the *Times*, attest Sir Frederick's friendship with one great writer; many other men of letters were happy to be numbered among his friends.



THE Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould has died, nearly ninety years of age. He was once described as "author of the British Museum Library"; this was an exaggeration, but he wrote over a hundred books on a great variety of subjects. The *Guardian* describes him as "poet, novelist, biographer, antiquary, folklorist, hagiologist, historian, topographer, theologian, ecclesiologist and

liturgiologist," and even this list does not cover his activities. Of his novels *Mehalah* and *The Broom Squire* were, perhaps, the best; they were at one time popular. Amongst his hymns were *Onward Christian Soldiers*, *Now the Day is Over*, *On the Resurrection Morning*, and *Through the Night of Doubt and Sorrow*, all of them classics of their kind. He wrote the *Lives of the Saints* in sixteen volumes; he was a pioneer in the study of country lore; he was early in the folk-song field with his fine collection, *Songs of the West*, which the obituary writers have over-looked, but which was a landmark in its day. Baring-Gould was "squarson" of Lew Trenchard, Devon, where his ancestors had held manor and living for three hundred years. His personality was very vigorous and independent. When a curate he educated and married a mill girl; he had fifteen children; he was a great walker, almost to the end; he published an autobiography in his ninetieth year; and it was a great experience to visit him, the tall, handsome old man, in his ancient home, full of furniture, old silver and candle-light.

NEW AND RECENT PERIODICALS

WE are unnecessarily late in reviewing the *Annual Register* for 1922 which appeared last year; but time has not staled its interest. Messrs. Longman publish this classic work at 30s.; it has been published without intermission for 164 years, and Burke and Johnson would be pleased to see it flourishing as it does. The summary of British political history is extremely good, and the foreign chronicles (signed) are worthy of the *Register's* traditions. The records of the year's work in Literature, Science and Art are even more noteworthy in a way, so much having been crowded into so small a space. We are especially impressed by Mr. Robin Legge on Music, and an anonymous gentleman on Literature, who has obviously read widely and well. Legal and Commercial Chronicles, reprints of important Documents, and a list of "eminent persons deceased in 1922," complete a publication which should find a place in every library which is used for reference.

WE have received the first four numbers of the *Journal of Public Administration* (Pitman, quarterly, 2s. 6d.) a review for which there was obviously a place. The cover is typographically ugly and dull in colour: why should causes always mean sickly colours? The print inside, however, is clear and the standard of the articles extraordinarily high. Amongst the subjects dealt with during the first year have been *An Organised Civil Service* (Lord Haldane), *Government and the Promotion of Trade* (Sir William H. Clark), *The American Civil Service* (G. H. Stuart Bunning), *The Aims of the Institute of Public Administration* (Lord Milner), *Technical Language* (A. B. Walkley, the eminent Post Office Official), *Statistics in Administration* (S. P. Vivian), *Administration of Business and Public Affairs* (Sir Josiah C. Stamp), and *The Qualifications, Recruitment and Training of Public Servants* (Sir Stanley Leathes). Many of the contributions were read as papers, and valuable discussions are appended. The journal may be commended to all who are concerned with the complex problems of modern administration.

POETRY

The Evening's End

AT evening's end as the last logs burned down
 To smouldering powder on the hearth,
 And it was time to close my book, you said,
 "I have been thinking of Death."

I looked up with a frown,
 Only half understanding you, my head
 Still chiming with the melancholy prose
 That I'd been reading. You went on : "Suppose
 It took me on a night like this—
 You sitting with your book, I sewing—
 And I laid down my work and shut my eyes
 To ease them a moment ; then, on opening them,
 Still saw the room, and you there, and the hem
 Unfinished : but under the floor the deep abyss,
 And overhead the deeper skies,
 And One awaiting me with inexorable eyes—
 So that I couldn't say a word, or give a kiss
 Or finish anything, but just be going."

What could I say to that ? I let you speak :
 "I'd rather be the last and see the three
 Of you off safely before Death came for me.
 Though if I died first it wouldn't be a week
 Before I'd make God fetch at least the two
 Children—it mightn't be quite so bad for you."

You were silent again a moment, thinking deep :
 "But all the same I'd hate to die that way.
 Suppose the baby wakened up from sleep
 That very instant and cried with fright !
 I'd want to go and switch the light
 On in my room and hush her off again :
 For all I'd know she'd be in pain.
 But Death would never mind a word I'd say :
 There'd be no use : he'd only answer 'Come !'
 And I would have to go with him.
 It isn't that I dread the dim
 Journey to what is, after all, our home ;
 But I'd be always hearing in my ears
 That cry of hers :
 I'd be wondering *why* she cried. I couldn't be
 At peace until I had you all with me."

THEODORE MAYNARD

Beethoven Deaf

BY noiseless streets to voiceless birds
 In the trees beneath a hill;
 By soundless wind the hot brow still,
 And hair most enviously stirred.

A silent cart slow on the road
 Tangible exasperates
 The big head bent beneath its load
 Of visioned sound and earclosed fates.

A. J. C. BROWN

In Bed

SO soft the eclipse of day
 Slips into night.
 And stillness laps the white
 Quiet bed. So faint I heard the sway
 Of trees that far away
 Still hold sunlight;
 That it might be the fall
 Of those alternate leaves,
 One light, one dark that all
 Must fluttering fall,
 As carefully fate weaves
 With those alternate leaves
 The pattern of my way;
 As drops this night, that day,
 A leaf upon the ground
 Whose sweet and breathless sound
 Is still one thundered chime
 Of the broad clock of time.

EVELYN STRACHEY

Footsteps at Night

(Composed during a night of severe pain in a broken arm, and written down from dictation in the morning.)

ALONE, in pain, without a light,
I heard the footsteps pass by night,
Passing swift or passing slow
In the little street below.

First came a plutocratic tread
Emphatic, echoing overhead,
And no advance, it seemed to me,
Was made without security.

A pit-a-pat ! A rap-tap-tap !
Here comes, I thought, some poor old chap,
Whose dwindled shanks require a stave
To help him safely to the grave.

A flurry of feet, the panting breath,
Of one whose quest is Life or Death—
But they, with souls of men for stake
Sit twirling still their Put-and-Take.

Lastly, the steps of lovers meet,
Hers, audacious, his, discreet;
Married, they make a tune of time,
A secret rhythm set to rhyme.

Ah! could I catch the wingéd sound
Of frolic feet that skim the ground—
Naked they nestled in my hand,
Than steel more fine, than pearl more bland,
And cool and slim as crescent moons
And white as cream in silver spoons—
If through the dusk I heard them dart
As once they danced into my heart,
Better than this would I maintain
The finer usages of pain.

Ah ! me, those sacramental feet
Long since forsook me and my street.

E. B. OSBORN

FIVE POEMS

Estrildis

(LOCRINE COMES UPON ESTRILDIS BATHING IN THE BROOK BEFORE HER CAVE)

HE came upon her bathing in the brook
Before her cave, not dreaming any near.
He lay deep in the tufted grass to look,
Dreading to lose the vision standing there.
He watched the warm wind lift her glorious hair,
And "Jove," he thought, in watching her afar,
"I would not be on any other star!"

Her face was turned from him, so on he crept
To the brook's very edge, there hid from sight.
Deeper and deeper in the stream she stept
That washed upon her smooth hips, sunny bright,
And now her hips were overcovered, quite;
And now the dimple in her waist was lost,
And little waves up to her shoulder tost.

Sudden she turned, he saw the downy hair
Beneath her arm, and lay deep in the grass,
And scarce dared breathe, she stood so near his lair,
And sat so light on each wave that did pass,
Just brushing it; she feigned she held a glass,
And played she was the mermaid of a grot—
And all the while he watched she knew it not.

But now his mortal patience killed outright,
He started up and called her by her name,
She stood as rooted, quaking with affright,
Then saw who called, and blushing red with shame,
Made for the deeper water whence she came,
And from that vantage angerly she spoke,
Bidding him back—then into laughter broke.

For she was glad that he had come that day;
Yet did she cease not bidding him begone,
Until, as for that time, Locrine gave way,
And left Estrildis in the pool alone.
In that green place a million King-cups shone,
And on that cloth-of-gold, her bathing done,
She basked her naked beauty in the sun.

And through her tresses peered with upturned eye,
 Up through the gold rifts of the poplar trees.
 There was a murmur in the grasses high,
 A lazy sound of Summer on the leas,
 And summer-drowsy, droning honey-bees—
 Silence has flatterers that about her keep,
 To breathe her praises. Estrildis half-asleep,

Thought upon Locrine : “Gone, alas, the while !
 Would he were here, would he were here with me ;
 And I who bid him hence, did I not smile ?
 Oh no ! I chid him most discourteously.”
 Afar a shepherd’s piping on the lea
 Chimed with her complaints, for whatsoe’er he meant,
 Sweet music voices the heart’s discontent.

(Shepherd)

There’s a weald in the West-land,
 Where Margrét herself hideth,
 There’s a quick stream through the bracken,
 In the land where she abideth.

Like red corn in the sunset,
 Such a colour is her hair,
 My spirit longs to touch it,
 And linger ever there.

Here over many mountains
 Is the setting of the sun,
 Where the Shepherd sits at nightfall,
 So weary and undone.

Great eyes at the shot window,
 It is dusk upon the wealds—
 Margrét, ha, Margrét !
 Look hither to these fields !

Locrine in fields afar now turned his eyes,
 Back to the pale wherein his lady lay,
 Back to the goal wherefrom his journey lies ;
 “I will but look from far, and go my way
 And breathe her air,” he thinks, “but no word say,
 Or mark the grot where nightly she doth dwell,
 And glut my fancy with an empty shell.”

And with this thought he climbed the craggy pass,
And gazed down from the turfy mountain's crest ;
He saw Estrildis stretched upon the grass,
He saw the wet grass that her body pressed,
And the black hair cling wet about her breast ;
And leap't, and ran, and came to his delight,
And flung his brown arms round her body white.

With joy and love they wore the golden day,
And in his West they saw the great sun down,
They saw the moon arise the colour of hay,
And all that sun-drenched land grow dull and brown ;
And now one star floats out above the town,
A purple mist drifts low upon the leas,
And spectral cattle dream beneath the trees.

O moon, lie long upon Mount Latmos' steep,
And linger long the night to mortal men ;
Long with the boy Endymion strive or sleep,
And let the noisy cocks not crow again.
The day will quite displace thy gentler strain,
Thy willows and thy waters subtle song,
Thy silences, thy shadows, black and long.

The Puritan

The Puritan through Life's sweet garden goes
To pluck the thorn and cast away the rose,
And hopes to please by this peculiar whim,
The God who fashioned it and gave it him.

The Golden Mean

A tempered greyhound for the chase,
A moderate racehorse for the race.

Could Love but last

WHAT, Sweet, so speedily undrest?
 Oh my white girl, my lily in bloom,
 My human lily that blooms best
 Within the four walls of my room.

Thus in my arms, this warm May night,
 While the great moon fantastic gleams,
 Thus shrouded from her elfin light,
 Ah, Sweetheart, let me share your dreams.

With every heart beat of my heart,
 And with my whole soul utterly
 I love you, can you without art,
 Reply in such like words to me

Thus simple and true? Or is true love
 No fruit for this fantastic time?
 And can we solely taste thereof
 In the dim dream world of old rhyme?

Then with her lips so passionately
 She sought out mine and held me pent,
 With all her bright hair over me—
 But kisses are no argument.

The wind blows north, the wind blows south,
 And thought too often brings despair—
 And yet 'twas sweet within my mouth
 The honey of her golden hair.

The Future

THE future need not make me
 The least degree forlorn
 If't be the annihilation
 That was ere I was born.

Then I nor mused, nor brooded,
 Nor hammered on "I am,"
 If recollection serve me
 I didn't give a dam.

For Hell, the Hell's exploded
They kept such stir about,
The official "Church of Holland"
Has ruled that Hell "is out."

For Heaven . . . a room bespoken
In "Cafe de la Foi"
And at the "Crown and Glory"
At least a buffet froid.

And then how blest to wander
At the divine caprice,
The City dream prefigured
By Memling or Matsys.

There'll be no heavy tipping,
My good deeds in a sack,
Borne by their feeblest porter
Will hardly break his back.

A second sprite shall carry,
He need not sweat nor lag,
The ghosts of all my poems
All in a ghostly bag.

KENNETH HARE



FOUR CARTOONS

By Will Dyson

I. Mr. Walkley suggests a foreign policy to Mr. Webb of the Labour Party.



II. Among the Fairies, Mr. de la Mare gets a set-back : "Frankly, Mr. de la Mare, speaking as a scientist and, I hope, without offence, one does not believe in the existence of mortals."



III. Flattered as any girl might be by the respectful attentions of the noblest in the land, the Muse of Politics yet yearns for the kind word that never comes from Mr. Gosse.



IV. History, lying jade, owning up to Mr. Belloc.

THE GRUB STREET NIGHTS

By J. C. SQUIRE.

III.—BAXTERIANA

MRS. HAWKE and her daughter Albinia amused themselves in their own way. They liked theatres, dances and supper parties: Albinia, at her usually early and hasty dinner, babbled to Dad about hotels he had never entered and young men he had never seen: the family were on perfect terms, and neither his wife nor his daughter had ever asked Eustace Hawke to go to a dance. No: he would kiss them both, help them on with their wraps, give them his blessing as they scuttled out to the car, and then he would retire to the top of the house. There was his study, quiet, secluded, warm, with regiments of books, a comfortable arm chair, a reading lamp, a box of cigars and a jolly log-fire. And there, the day's work at his chambers put clean out mind, he would settle down to his literary hobbies.

The chief of these was the life and works of Robert Baxter; and there was certainly nothing abnormal in that. Thousands of others shared it, lawyers, doctors, parsons, literary men, tradesmen, wherever the English language was spoken: and the fact that it gave him a masonic connection with so large and widespread a community was to Hawke one of its incidental charms. He liked the monthly dinners of the Baxter Club, the annual pilgrimages to Baxter's birthplace, the quotations from Baxter that he heard on the lips of politicians and other commonplace people. He enjoyed the little monographs on the aspects of Baxter, Baxter's residences and travels, Baxter's bibliography, Baxter at Cambridge, Baxter's friends, which are continually peeping out from the Press in England and America. He like contributing occasionally to the odd little periodical called *Baxteriana* which an enthusiast at Nottingham conducted, and he liked getting letters about his contributions. Grubbing for unimportant and unprofitable facts in a great writer's life was a relaxation after the hard and uncongenial work of the day, and miscellaneous reading was all the more amusing when anything he encountered, event or opinion, might be related to the one great theme of his hero.

For, though Hawke was always reticent about his deepest thoughts, Baxter certainly was his hero. His interest in Baxter was more than that of a mere collector or critic; his hobby-horse was more than a toy. Like many men externally dry and worldly-wise, he had a deep faculty for reverence, and he revered the memory of Robert Baxter. To him Baxter was not merely a great man and a great writer, but a teacher whose sagacity never failed and a character the fine rectitude of whose responses

could never be questioned. Though Baxter had died before Hawke was born he felt that he knew and loved him better than any human being. He expanded and mellowed in the society of his Baxterian cronies, for he knew that they shared his feelings. Often, when he was sitting by himself, some phrase in Baxter's essays or letters, humorous and humane, or magnificently resolute in its clear morality, would make him rest his book on his knee, and stare with a rapt expression into the fire. He was thus engaged, one foggy evening in November, when there came a knock at the door. "Damn!" he said under his breath; but aloud "Come in!"

The parlourmaid entered. "Mr. Atkins is below, sir, and would like to see you."

"Why on earth didn't you bring him up?" asked Mr. Hawke, a little roughly.

Edith flushed: "I told him I would see if you were in, sir," she said.

"I'm sorry, Edith," said Mr. Hawke. "Quite right. Bring him up."

Mr. Hawke glanced at the whisky tray and resigned himself to a spoiled evening. Atkins was, no doubt, the son of an old friend, and he wished him well at the Bar. It was also true that he had told the boy to come in whenever he liked in the evenings; but why would people take polite remarks so literally? Three visits in three months was absurdly excessive on the part of a youth who had nothing in common with him, and who did not even seem to enjoy himself when he came. Footsteps approached up the stairs. A knock. "Mr. Atkins." There stood that superior and not very able young man, with his smooth fair hair, his small fair moustache, his expression, half-sulky, half-supercilious. "Come in, Atkins," said the host, "I'd been hoping you might drop in."

Mr. Atkins condescended to a whisky. Once more it was not clear why he had come, though he surely must like to come; once more Mr. Hawke took pains to make him talk. He asked him about his work; he had got one or two small cases on circuit, but his hopes, fears and ambitions were unfathomable. Questions about his family elicited the usual answer: "Oh, they're all right as far as I know." Questions of the gossippy kind about people elicited two kinds of answer. If he knew the person mentioned, he said, "Oh, yes, I know him," as though that dealt with that. If he did not know the person, he said, "No, I don't know him," thereby dismissing the person, possibly very eminent and old enough to be his grandfather, into some limbo of insignificant shades. "He is my guest," reflected Mr. Hawke after he had had once more to abandon the kindly hypothesis that Mr. Atkins was merely shy in the presence of an older man.

It was late in the evening, and Mr. Hawke had begun to hope that his young exquisite was about to go, when Mr. Atkins saw fit to notice the book which his host had laid open, face downwards, on the little table between them. "Ah, Baxter," he remarked with a slight lift of the eyebrows, "a nice lot he was."

"He happens to be my favourite author," replied Mr. Hawke, with some coldness, very deliberately knocking a long ash from his cigar.

"A pleasant customer, all the same," said Mr. Atkins. "Perhaps you haven't seen those letters?"

"I think," said Mr. Hawke stiffly, "that I have read every letter of his that has ever been printed."

"Oh, I don't think the ones I mean will be printed," said Atkins, with a wintry smile. "There might," he remarked, with a faint titter, "be trouble with the police." Mr. Hawke sprang round in his chair: "What the devil do you mean by it?" he asked fiercely.

The young man appeared a little alarmed. "I didn't mean to shock you, sir," he said, dropping his affectation of impassivity, "but I didn't know you would take it so seriously. I didn't suppose you'd know really. It's only a week or two ago that Bertie Fynes got hold of them."

"Them? What?"

"The letters," said the youth, a little pleased at the sensation he had made, though surprised at its nature. He relapsed into his own phraseology. "Thick isn't the word for them. I've never seen anything like them. What an old hypocrite!"

Hawke rose to his feet, suppressing his heat with difficulty. He stood with his back to the fire and looked sternly down at his guest. "I suppose you are hardly to be expected to know," he said, "that you are defaming the memory of one of the noblest of men, and I won't suggest that you are consciously telling a revolting falsehood. I can only presume that Fynes has imposed on you with a disgusting practical joke."

Atkins flushed, began a sentence angrily, checked himself, looked at his feet and said, surlily: "How did I know you were going to take it like this? Anyhow I've seen the letters."

"I didn't say you hadn't seen something," retorted Hawke, "you've seen some filthy forgeries or other. I can't think Fynes doesn't know better, even if you don't. It's simply appalling when men of his standing lend themselves to things of this sort. I won't hear another word about it!"

Atkins' mouth curled for an instant in an obstinate smile. He controlled himself. "I'm sorry," he said, "let's change the subject. May I help myself to another drink?"

Hawke nodded coldly. Then he too pulled himself together and resumed polite conversation. In another ten minutes the young man, with an exaggerated surprise as his eye caught the clock, professed an urgent obligation to go, and went.

II

Hawke's anger simmered down. He told himself to forget the episode. It took all sorts to make a world; fools like Atkins and insensitives like Fynes; no great man's reputation had escaped foul aspersions from his

degraded inferiors, and even Baxter, unsullied though his memory had for so long apparently been, could not hope to escape the general fate. He invited such attack less than most eminent men ; his honesty was so evident, his noblest words and acts expressed with such humour and humility, he was so manly, so hearty, so sociable, so tolerant to weaknesses that he did not share, that the most vicious and jealous had been constrained to let him alone. He could not be expected to escape altogether, but slander against Baxter bore its own contradiction on the face of it, and the best thing his devotees could do was to let it alone, dismissing it with the brief, frank contemptuous description that would have contented Baxter himself had he heard it. His whole life was on record in Pickersgill's great biography, a life of public service, of innocent private enjoyment, of deep spiritual experience, in which for months at a time every hour of the great humanist's waking existence could be counted and shared. The aspersion was as absurd as it was monstrous ; whatever record came to light Baxter could never be shamed. A vision of the rugged, kindly, old face, so familiar in a hundred portraits, came back to Hawke, as he mused by his dying fire. Yes, it was preposterous ! If Fynes was hardly capable of so vile a fraud himself, he must have a morbid side to him, hitherto unsuspected, which, in this regard, had betrayed him into a gullibility equally uncharacteristic of him. Some low creature had imposed on him with a forgery for the sake of getting money out of him. Hawke went to bed ; the family would come in later. Several times that night he woke up.

III

Yet Fynes was an intelligent, an unusually acute, man ; a man less likely than most to be taken in, as shrewd as he was self-controlled. The thought kept on recurring to Mr. Hawke during the few days that followed Atkins' call. He would impatiently thrust it aside and then it would return, like a creeping spider that a man brushes off his clothes. When he was hard at work in his chambers, in pauses of the conversation at family meals, in bed especially when all was quiet except for the passing cabs : it returned again and again, with unpleasant insistence. In the daytime it was comparatively easy to deal with ; it could be ignored. At night, when the imagination will pursue strange paths and almost any wild horror seems possible in a universe so vague and so dark, it would not be driven away. The first time that an inner voice whispered to Mr. Hawke : "Suppose it is all true?" his flesh crept, his hair tingled, and he reproached himself in an agony of shame. The voice came again and again, insinuating like the serpent in the garden, extending the sphere of its corruption like the maggot in the apple, until he had become so accustomed to it that he began to reflect upon its argument, each time going farther and farther before abusing himself as a beast and roughly pushing his thoughts away. Suppose it was

all true? Might it not be all true? Had not every man's nature unexplored depths? Was any man's life really known to his fellows? Had we not all things to hide? Wasn't it possible that every one of the friends whom he most unreservedly admired led a secret life which was concealed beneath an open face and a façade of morality and good works? Could he swear that in any single case there was no furtive indulgence which would horrify the world if exposed, that in any cupboard there was no skeleton? Were not men such enigmas that anything might be true about them? Had he not heard hushed-up stories about some of the most reputable? Might there not be reserves behind the confessions of even the most candid of them, a St. Augustine or a Rousseau, depths beyond depths? Was not the brute in every man tugging at the chain? Who could promise that it should never break its bars, never escape for some terrible excursion? Again and again the questions returned. He had thought he knew everything there was to be known about Baxter; he would have gone bail for Baxter even had every other "worthy" on the roll come to the test and failed. Yet could he be sure? Baxter might have gone through seventy years of life concealing the evil side of his nature; many of his moods of depression might be traceable to that, much of his confident judgment of others to a perverted desire to compensate, in a way, for his own derelictions. Suppose he were bad all through; that all his tolerance of the sinner as well as all his intolerance of the sin was the fruit of a devilish irony which none had ever penetrated, a sustained mocking joke which he never allowed anyone to share! Hawke's mind groped through endless dark corridors full of bats and crawling things; then retreated in horror at its own ill pursuits. One page from Baxter's essays, one sentence from his recorded conversation, one recollection of the eyes and voice and gestures that were as familiar as those of a living friend, and the thing seemed impossible again.

Hawke grew more and more unhappy. His life was poisoned. He cursed Atkins for breaking in on his peace; he cursed Fynes for a gloating fiend; he cursed himself for a vacillating traitor. Yet no sooner had he called himself a traitor than the quiet voice resumed its acid argument: "No, not a traitor, a coward. You think it may be true, and you won't face it." He would reply that the mere assent to an investigation of so foul a charge was treachery to his hero's memory; Baxter himself would never have persuaded himself thus or wavered thus in an old allegiance. "Sophistry, sophistry," came the reply, reiterated until he had no longer the strength to resist it, "you know in your heart that you are deceiving yourself, that you are being a coward for comfort's sake."

About a week after the beginning of his trouble this word "comfort" came so clearly into his head that he could not help a grim smile. For if he was a coward for comfort's sake, it was a poor sort of comfort he was now enjoying. He was both miserable and restless. He could not work properly, read properly or sleep properly; he was brusque and distracted in conversation, and at home he was so grumpy that his wife

and daughter became seriously concerned about him, and began pertinaciously to urge him, directly and by elaborate hints, to take a holiday, which increased his irritability. He answered them with transparent falsehoods: there was nothing wrong with him, there was nothing annoying him, a man might be allowed to think about his work, and so on. They could not drive him; but in the end he drove himself. He could stand this uncertainty no longer, an uncertainty which not only ruined his work but robbed him of his recreation: for, since the fateful evening, he had been hardly able to look at his bookshelves, much less settle down to his favourite reading. One morning, when the sun shone, he went to his study before leaving home and wrote to Fynes a letter which he sent off by hand, asking for an immediate reply to his chambers. "I may not be in to dinner to-night; I have to see a man," he remarked to his wife as he left home. "Do look after yourself, Eustace," she said impetuously, "I do wish you'd take things more easily. Anyhow, it'll be all right to-night. We're both going to Lady Fouracres'."

IV

"Dear Fynes," ran the letter, "I have just heard from Atkins that you possess a manuscript collection of Baxter's letters. The account Atkins gave me of them was so astonishing as to be incredible. I can only suppose that there is a mistake somewhere. I hope Atkins was not in error in telling me about them. But since he *has* told me, I feel that I must, if you will allow me, see them. I am, as you may know, a close student of Baxter's life and works; and I feel it is vital to me to clear up this most disquieting mystery. I could come round to your flat to-night if you are free." The plunge had been taken; as he proceeded to the Temple Mr. Hawke was relieved, and relieved to find himself relieved. Reasoning had frequently failed him. Something beyond reason now told him that he had done the right thing. For the first time for days he was able to work well and to eat a normal lunch. Fynes' answer came, "By all means." Mr. Hawke dined alone at Simpson's, in the agreeable calm of a man who has acted upon an irrevocable decision, burnt his boats and landed on a firm, although unknown, shore from which return is impossible. He walked along the Embankment to the flat in Westminster, and, as he walked up the steps of the Mansions, was ashamed to feel a thrill of excitement which conscience tried to quell with a desperate "No: this shameful thing is *not* true."

Fynes received him in his luxurious study-drawing-room, the abode of a bachelor with a taste for Chippendale, French classics, old morocco and limited editions. "Delighted to see you," he said, and proceeded at once, rather apologetically, to explain why he had never invited Hawke to see his Baxter treasures before. "Of course, I need scarcely say, Hawke, that in the ordinary way I should be only too charmed for

you to see and make use of anything I happen to have. But I couldn't help keeping these particular things dark. I'm not especially keen on blowing on people's reputations, and I don't especially enjoy hurting their admirers' feelings. I knew how devoted you were to Baxter, and I didn't want to upset you; besides, these things, whoever had written them, would probably shock you. I, I am afraid, am rather case-hardened."

"That's all right," said Mr. Hawke, uneasily looking around, "I quite understand. And I hope you understand my motives in coming. The thing has got absurdly on my nerves and I simply must get rid of it." His loyalty and his desire that the solid ground should not fail beneath him were responsible for his next words. "I hope you won't mind my saying that I shall probably question their authenticity."

Fynes looked at him with eyes steady under their drooping lids, and mouth that tightened whimsically. "I doubt it," he said, "Their pedigree is perfect." He walked to a corner by the door, knelt down, and began unlocking the lowest drawer of a dark mahogany cabinet. "I got them," he said, "from Brooks of Oxford Street. He doesn't usually deal in this sort of thing, but a great author is another matter. I take it you admit that Brooks is straight?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Hawke, gulping slightly, and feeling at once a little sick and a little excited now that he was right on the verge.

"Well, he gave his guarantee, and I've gone into it pretty carefully myself. It may be astonishing, but I can tell you it's all right." He rose with a portfolio, brought it over and put it on a small table in front of Hawke. Keeping his hand on the packet, he went on: "I need scarcely ask you whether you know Baxter's handwriting?"

Hawke looked him in the eyes with a spurious boldness. "I know it," he said, "as well as my own. I know the papers of the day and their watermarks, and I know something about inks. I know where Baxter was at almost any date in his life. I also claim to know something about all his friends."

"I don't think you know about this one," remarked Fynes with a cynical little laugh, "Look at them yourself, and take your time about it."

Mr. Hawke examined the letters. They were a revelation. There was no question here of mere exuberant animality or jocular coarseness. It was like looking into the Pit. . . .

V

He walked home. His world had been shattered. For the first few minutes the excitement of discovery had been so great that he had almost enjoyed himself. Even now at moments the savage in him was elated when the thought came: "What a secret! Imagine the sensation if one told the world to-morrow." By the time he reached his dark house the

savage had savoured all he could of that imaginary thrill; there remained the civilised man ashamed at his own baseness, sorrow-stricken because of the destruction of his idol, unable to see how he would ever reconstruct a world to live in, in revolt against the meanness and squalor of the whole human race, willing to believe anything of anybody, hopeless, wretched past despair. He lay awake in anguish all that night, turning or still on his back, his eyes sometimes shut, sometimes deliberately open to the glimmering window as a partial refuge from the nightmare of his own thoughts. Now and then the face of Baxter came back to him: sometimes the old face unchanged, sometimes a mask distorted with villiany, sometimes a new image with reproach in its eyes, unjustly presenting itself considering what he had learned. Mr. Hawke thought of the collection of books in the room across the landing; the docketed Baxterian references; the half-completed papers; the files of *Baxteriana*, repository of the eager and innocent recreations of so many harmless people—if indeed anybody was harmless. What a monstrous monument to hypocrisy they had all built up; how they had imposed on the world with their ideal pictures of this hideous creature; with what fatuity they had taken him for granted; with what ease he had swindled them all into thinking that all good causes would be helped if they discovered who his maternal great-grandparents were and in what hotel at Chichester he had stayed during his one brief visit there! The night seemed endless; when he rose at last in the cold dawn he was amazed at the face, drawn, white, hag-ridden, which confronted him in the glass. Daylight made things easier though; and after a early toast and coffee, he fled from the prospect of an inquisitive family, walked up Sloane Street to the Park, and with his overcoat well buttoned up, began to stroll up and down by the Serpentine. It was a crisis; what should he do? Was it his duty to explode the vast deceit of the Baxter legend or was it not? Should he be a party to a colossal lie? or should he precipitate an exposure which would destroy the pastime of thousands, the living even of some, and be a powerful agent on behalf of a cynical and embittered philosophy of life? He had thought the crucial decision about duty had already been taken; but no, it was still in front of him. Through a thin mist a wintry sun touched with orange the sluggish ripples of the lake; a grey gull drifted to and fro; the solitude and quietness gradually assuaged his trouble and induced a certain resignation. Peace seemed worth having; even the illusion of stability better than a world all obvious quicksands. "Great is Truth and it shall prevail"; "Let justice be done if the Heavens fall": with these two proverbs he had often fortified himself during a life of struggle, but this morning they had lost their force. He was fatigued; he envied those whose faith was undisturbed; "why trouble them?" he asked himself. And arguments came to reinforce his inclination. If Baxter's reputation was not a work of nature could it not be regarded as an ideal creation of Art? It expressed a dream of the race if not the achievement of Baxter. That figure, so loved and revered, had

never lived in the world, but it had the existence of a grand statue, and to destroy it would be like shattering a statue to pieces because its lines had but a legendary basis. Why diminish the beauty in the world? or remove a consolatory lie that was only a lie in a sense? The passers-by grew more numerous. Mr. Hawke did not wish to attract attention by parading longer in Napoleonic contemplation; he made a quick resolve, stepped out for Hyde Park Corner, took a cab to the Temple, and rang Fynes up. Fynes was still in, no doubt at a late breakfast. "I say, Fynes," said Mr. Hawke, "do you feel inclined to sell those letters?" He thought he heard a slight titter at the other end; it made him blush, but he was determined to see the thing through. "Well," came the answer, "as a matter of fact, I had been thinking of it already. I've got an offer for them from America." "We can't do it over the telephone," said Mr. Hawke resolutely, "I'll come along and see you at once." Then, without giving Fynes time to say that he was going out, he rang off. He called a cab in the Strand, and set off again for the scene of his last night's ordeal.

His mind was made up. He could not bear that the scoffers of the world should rejoice to find that Baxter also had disgraced himself. "Hypocrisy," he remembered, "is the tribute that vice pays to virtue." After all, it showed the superiority of virtue, and any tribute was better than none; why, he thought, with a wistful smile, should he intercept Baxter's tribute, if that only meant a score for unashamed and unmitigated vice? Arrived at the flat, he found on Fynes' face an expression of friendly interest. "Do you want these letters very badly, Hawke?" he asked, "for, if so, I'm afraid you'll have to pay through the nose for them." "I will pay anything within reason," said Hawke; and at the other man's cold chaffering he found reviving within himself something of his old affection for Baxter, a desire to protect him maternally against a cruel sardonic world. "I've been offered a very large sum by an American," continued Fynes, "He wants them purely as a collector. I don't know what your interest in them may be, but if, as I suspect, you want to suppress them, you've got to go rather a long way." "To be frank, I do want to suppress them," said Hawke: "I think they are abominable and ought to be suppressed. Can't you see that?" "Oh, yes, I can see it," said Fynes "and it may comfort you to know that my American is the last man in the world to publish them. Half his pleasure would vanish if he hadn't got the things to himself. He has offered me four thousand pounds for them: I need money, and it means a lot to me."

Hawke was dazed. Four thousand pounds. He began to confess inability to compete and then his gorge rose. What guarantee was there that the letters would not be vulgarly exploited? Ought not a self-respecting man to make any sacrifice rather than be beaten in a matter of this kind? Wouldn't Baxter himself want him to have the courage of his convictions? he reflected automatically; then pulled himself together with the reminder that Baxter was a blackguard and a humbug. Four

thousand pounds, though he made a good income, was half his savings; and he was a prudent man. But he suddenly saw red; he simply had to act; and, rather hoarsely, but still quietly, he said, "I'll give you five thousand if you'll hand over the manuscripts now." "That's good enough for me," said Fynes.

Mr. Hawke did not go back to his chambers. He went to his house and there he went to his study; the fire was not lit, but he lit it and nursed it to a blaze. He then opened his parcel and, without looking again at its contents, put them one by one on the flames and watched them shrivel. As the last curled up and calcined his heart lightened, and he sighed: he was burning letters of Baxter's, and it was impossible for the old love to be entirely uprooted. He fought down his pangs, turned, and looked at his shelves with alien eyes.

VI

Rumours got about; they were indignantly repudiated by Baxter's champions; there was no evidence, and Baxter stands as high as ever he did. Mr. Hawke, however, found his occupation gone. He could pity Baxter now; he was not merely disgusted with him. But he committed his unfinished researches to the flames and he resigned his membership of the Baxter Society, without giving any explanation. They implored him to remain on if only as an honorary member; he weakened and assented. But nothing could revive his former enthusiasm; nobody else could minister to his tastes as Baxter had ministered to them; he avoided Baxterians and he found himself disinclined for any new literary hobby. The result was that one morning he suddenly announced to his wife and daughter that he would like to join them at the evening's dance if they didn't mind.

They were overjoyed. So it is an ill wind that blows nobody any good.

EAVESDROPPING

By ARTHUR PONSONBY, M.P.

METHODICAL and scientific eavesdropping must be difficult. A curtain shakes so easily and a key hole is so draughty. I am sure I should not see much through a key hole and the whistling draught would interfere with my hearing. Officially, eavesdropping has fallen very much out of fashion, except in the C.I.D. When I was in the diplomatic service I was never instructed to stand behind the arras. Polonius was ready enough to do it.

My Lord, he's going to his mother's closet ;
Behind the arras I'll convey myself
To hear the process.

But, as we know, his experience was unfortunate.

In the Secretary of State's room in one of the Government Offices there is an enormous screen which tradition claims to have been used by the official eavesdropper. I have no idea if this is true or if the practice is still continued, but the screen is there. At 10, Downing Street, in the last century, a certain Prime Minister had the space between the double doors which divide the Cabinet room from the adjoining room filled with sandbags. The object of this was to prevent a close relation of his from listening to the deliberations of the Cabinet. There is a story, too, of a woman who hid herself in a grandfather clock to overhear the proceedings of a Freemasons' meeting. A number of instances of historical eavesdropping might be quoted.

If I undertook a definite bit of eavesdropping I feel sure I should miss the important points and hear only what was irrelevant. If I myself were likely to be the subject of conversation I should stoutly refuse to do any eavesdropping, for I cannot imagine anything more disagreeable than hearing oneself discussed by others. People have heard their friends and relations criticised by strangers and have been uncomfortable not knowing whether they should intervene.

However, whether we like it or not we are all obliged to do a certain amount of eavesdropping, or perhaps we may call it overhearing, as we pass through the crush of our fellow men on our daily pursuits. I must confess I find a great fascination in overhearing conversations in trains. Talking to complete strangers is generally dull, because they are not really themselves, any more than you are; and you are not sufficiently at your ease to study them. But behind the screen of your newspaper in a railway carriage corner you are snugly aloof and can hear people talking to one another quite intimately and with an ease

and naturalness which cannot be imitated on the stage. It is fascinating: it is "as good as a play." You have got to pick up the threads as best you can, guess the relationship of the interlocuters and, while nine times out of ten the conversation may be uninterestingly trivial, on the tenth occasion you may catch snatches of a romance, a farce or a drama cut straight out of real life.

You simply cannot avoid overhearing in the train. There is a game which consists in carrying on a conversation in a railway carriage and seeing how soon you can draw the intervention of a fellow-passenger by making some inaccurate statement. Of course if you say the train will arrive at 4.50 when it really arrives at 4.15 you will draw an immediate interruption from someone who will correct you out of pure kindness. That would be playing the game badly. If you began a political discussion and remarked casually "now that Asquith is Prime Minister again," you might possibly draw a correction, although your fellow-travellers might hear and smile but say nothing, simply awaiting a further display of your abysmal ignorance. But a subtler way of playing the game is to let fall gradually slight inaccuracies on subjects suggested by the morning's news; and unless there is loud conversation going on in another part of the carriage, a correction will come sooner or later because everyone is listening.

On the whole in England silence generally prevails with travellers; the hubbub of conversation you get abroad is rare. There is, however, often the bore who wants everyone to hear what he is saying or anyhow does not mind if they do. I overheard a man in the underground, whose voice pierced through the usual din, begin again to his dejected and obviously weary companion "We've got a family wedding next Thursday." I was far enough off to escape the torrent that followed, but his companion was not. There are conversations which are sometimes highly technical. I heard two men in an hotel having an animated discussion close to me. I only understood the pronouns and conjunctions but none of the nouns or verbs. They were engineering experts. But the great majority of conversations are concerned with incidents of travelling: trains, luggage, stations, timetables, and are uninteresting, and the endless details about Aunt Emma's symptoms are tiresome. But an occasional sentence overheard in passing can be intriguing and sometimes quite entertaining. I have collected a few.

There was a silent middle aged couple in a railway carriage. They never uttered a word to one another till we were just getting into Waterloo Station when she said to him, as he was reaching down his bag from the rack, "Then you'll take Mabel to the Pictures." The "M-n-yes" which came in reply was full of meaning. I was sure he had hoped to avoid having to commit himself to this annoying engagement. He had other plans.

Crossing Trafalgar Square one day I heard a young man say to another: "Now, Charlie, I am going to be quite candid." The place did

not strike me as appropriate for candour, but I was prevented from hearing more by the charge of a motor bus.

Even when there is very little in the actual observation, one receives some sort of impression. "You know Brown," I heard a man say to another and then he added, "A. E. W. Brown." (How well I know A. E. W. Brown; he rather fancies himself, probably writes in something or other and is known to his friends as A. E. W.)

One girl to another in the street, "You see, I like to be off on my own just for once."

An indignant female voice in a crush outside a big drapers, "I wonder she cares to look so saucy."

In the lounge of an hotel (the place where the highwater mark of devastating futility is reached), "I can't think what gentlemen do with themselves with no fancy work. They can only read."

In the same. Large overdressed middle aged woman to stranger, "What are you insinuating now Mr-er-em-er?" (She didn't even know his name).

Parting words at a railway carriage door, "Come early and mind you bring lots of money." The listener's face was a study.

In a ferry boat, "There wasn't a hitch from start to finish." (This made me feel cheerful for the rest of the day).

In a golf club smoking room, "I find a hot bath before dinner excellent for lumbago." (I nearly intervened because I am a specialist on the subject).

A cross current on the telephone, "I am afraid I have torn up all the details." (I knew this was a lie).

Little girl on the beach to her father (a man with a walrus moustache and bottle nose), "Daddy, will you like me to have legs this colour when I go home?" Father, greatly shocked "Oh no no. Not at all a nice colour."

"The country wants it," I heard a charwoman say to a policeman in one of the House of Commons passages early one morning. I lingered, scenting a political argument; but I was wrong. It was rain she was speaking of.

Youth to girl very confidently. "I know what I *ought* to have said to her; that's where a boy drops in for it." (I felt sympathetic as I so often know what I *ought to have said*).

At a restaurant table, Englishman to foreigner, proudly, not to be outdone. "Oh, yes, we've got our communists too."

In a restaurant car, a man hoarsely across the table to his companion "... and sure enough within the year he died." (It must have been the old last-to-sit-down-at-dinner-of-thirteen story.)

"You needn't look so offended." This was a facetious man to his friend who was not the least offended, only unutterably bored.

"You'll never persuade me," I heard a young man exclaim defiantly in a tone which betrayed that it was the last effort of one who was already persuaded.

"There's my shilling, she said, and it was a four shilling fare!" This was the remark of an elderly lady as she settled down in a train starting from London. (I know that shilling).

"That's my idea" said a small eager ugly man hurrying along the street and illustrating the idea, whatever it was, by modelling the air in front of him with his two long thin hands. (I longed to know what it was).

"I haven't got ten bob on me at the moment" said a voice outside a theatre at about 7.30. (I was not able to wait and see whether his friend had).

Child in omnibus to very tired mother: "Mummy, what's the largest number in the world?"

At a restaurant in Sheffield during the election: "A fellow called Ponsonby is the candidate; they say he's a Bolshevik."

Occasionally the voice and manner may be attractive but the remark disappointing. As when after an hours silence in the train a large man leant accross to his friend and after clearing his throat asked in a deep impressive voice; "Have you been to Lyons' Corner House?"

But perhaps the best single sentence ever overheard came from a woman in a railway carriage, who, as the train stopped, ended up her discourse, which had been drowned by the noise, with the remark "... and he never knew she was his mother till he followed her to the grave."

At the table of a crowded restaurant one may be the unwilling witness of a whole interlude between loving or quarrelling couples. That however is uncomfortable and embarrassing. There is something indecent in in their not minding one's presence.

Once I saw the result of what must have been one of the best jokes ever made, although I did not actually hear it. As I turned the corner of a narrow street in a small Italian town, I came suddenly on a group in an arched doorway—a tall good-looking man standing, two women with bright silk handkerchiefs on their heads sitting on the steps with two or three children at their knees. The joker had his back to me and was facing them. He had cracked his joke just before I came on the scene and the laugh that went up I can never forget—loud, fresh, resonant, uproarious, echoing in the narrow street again and again; the whole group throwing back their heads, their mouths wide open, disclosing their beautiful teeth. And then after the explosion of noise, the stamping, slapping and weezing as preliminaries to another outburst. I had not heard the joke; had I heard it I should most probably not have understood it; had I understood it I should very likely not have thought it funny. But I laughed too, as I passed, for laughter is infectious: and they laughed the more as they saw me laugh. It has always remained for me an unforgettable joke. I have overheard jokes in trains and buses, but never very good ones; although the slightly intoxicated man in a bus one evening who kept repeating in an affectedly precise voice; "I like people to be very kind" certainly made me smile.

Snatched sentences from a street brawl are unpleasant. The events are too crude. Fatuous remarks overheard at a party are not worth remembering. Full blown argument may be arresting. I heard a boy of sixteen one day tackle two middle aged men in the train. I was entirely on his side and as nearly as possible intervened when the argument became hot. Fortunately I remained silent because he had the triumph of routing them single-handed before we reached our destination. I used very much to enjoy the repartees of horse-bus drivers in the old times; but those days are so remote that I have forgotten them all.

The roar of human conversation never ceases. We pass along, threading our way through the babble, in which are bedded here and there drama, romance, comedy and farce. At times we are actors ourselves, but occasionally by unpremeditated eavesdropping we may have the privilege of being audience.

CAPTAIN SLOCUM*

By A. P. HERBERT

"I suddenly remembered that I could not swim"

CAPTAIN JOSHUA SLOCUM has long been the friend and hero of the amateur sailor ; but for one reason or another his book has never, I think, attracted the ordinary lover of books, or even those who will suffer anything for a good story. Which is a pity. Captain Slocum was no Melville, and no Conrad, but a genuinely simple seaman, who was also a good reader and knew how to tell a plain story without pretension ; and here and there in the book his simplicity and reverence make him unconsciously the writer of literature. There is very little in it which should weary or offend the purist ; and compared with the sensational fiction which so many purists eagerly devour, the whole book is great writing. But the story, after all, is the principal thing—the story and the man. And his story is perhaps the most remarkable record of human achievement yet written. The man who built a boat with his own hands and in it sailed round the world with no help or company but his own, did something greater than the discovery of the Poles or the climbing of the highest mountains. These feats are performed by well-found expeditions, by men having the fellowship of others in danger and discouragement. Slocum was a poor man, and what he did he did alone.

Let me trace the bare outlines of his Odyssey. He was a native of Nova Scotia, and an American citizen ; and he had the sea in his blood. His father, he says, "was the sort of man who, if wrecked on a desolate island, would find his way home, if he had a jack-knife and could find a tree." Thus he followed the sea from boyhood, was ship's cook, seaman, and for twenty years master of sailing-ships. In 1892, sailing-ships becoming scarce, he was looking reluctantly for employment ashore, when a friend presented him with an ancient sloop† called the *Spray*, which lay neglected in a field and was believed to be 100 years old. This relic he knocked to pieces and rebuilt himself, to his own notions, in thirteen months : and when he had finished, nothing of the original but an anchor and the carving of the fiddle-head remained.

In April, 1895, Captain Slocum and the new *Spray* sailed out of Boston (Mass.), and headed casually round the world. He had no chronometer ; for his old one had been long in disuse, and "it would cost 15 dollars to clean and rate it." Fifteen dollars he could not afford, so

* "Sailing Alone Around the World." (New Edition). By Captain Joshua Slocum. Sampson Low.

† Her rig, in English parlance, was first that of a cutter, afterwards a yawl. Her length was 36 feet 9 inches "over all," something more than half the length of a cricket pitch. Her tonnage was 9 tons net, and 13 gross, though what is the difference I do not pretend to know.

he left it at home. But at Yarmouth he bought a tin clock, the only time-piece he carried throughout the voyage. "The price of it was a dollar and a half, but on account of the face being smashed the merchant let me have it for a dollar."

He crossed the Atlantic—a "preliminary trip"—called at the Azores and at Gibraltar, and from there proposed to sail through the Mediterranean, down the Red sea, and so "East-about" the world. But in the Straits he was chased (in a gale) by Moorish pirates, and thereupon decided to go down the West Coast of Africa, round Cape Horn and "West-about" instead: as a man, being at Victoria on the Inner Circle and anxious to reach Euston, might decide to travel by Notting Hill and not by Aldgate—and would give more thought to the matter than Slocum gave. Forty days out from Gibraltar he reached Pernambuco. From there to Rio de Janeiro, and southward for Cape Horn. But on the way he ran ashore on the coast of Uruguay, and was nearly drowned. For it was here, after covering some seven thousand miles of ocean alone in a small boat, that this remarkable man "suddenly" discovered that he could not swim.

This incident must justify a digression, for it illustrates delightfully the Captain's quality. And we must use our imaginations, however lubberly; for it is a defect of Slocum's matter-of-fact style, that unless we keep them hard at work, his biggest adventures sound common-place. Imagine, then, this little boat, cannoning before daybreak into the coast of Uruguay, lonely sandhills, under a bright moon. The tide was falling and she could not be got off until the tide rose again. Meanwhile, it was necessary to "lay out" the large anchor (weight, 180 pounds), or, in plain English, to convey it somehow some distance out to sea. He therefore launched from the deck his tiny "dory," or dinghy, "my only life-boat,"

which when the anchor and cable were in it, was swamped at once in the surf, the load being too great for her. Then I cut the cable and made two loads of it instead of one. The anchor with forty fathoms [240 feet of cable] bent and already buoyed, I now took and succeeded in getting through the surf; but my dory was leaking fast, and by the time I had rowed far enough to drop the anchor she was full to the gunwale and sinking. There was not a moment to spare, and I saw clearly that if I failed now all might be lost. I sprang from the oars to my feet, and lifting the anchor above my head, threw it clear just as she was turning over. I grasped her gunwale and held on as she turned bottom up, for I suddenly remembered that I could not swim.

Then he tried to right the dory, but she rolled over, and left him as before, clinging to her gunwale in the water, perhaps some fifty yards from the *Spray* and the shore, alone with the moon, unable to swim, and surely in the most humiliating plight in the whole history of marine adventure.

For giving a moment to cool reflection [says this casual hero], I found that although the wind was blowing moderately toward the land, the current was carrying me to sea, and that something would have to be done. Three

times I had been under water, in trying to right the dory, and I was just saying "Now I lay me," when I was seized by a determination to try yet once more, so that no one of the prophets of evil I had left behind me could say "I told you so." Whatever the danger may have been, much or little, I can truly say that the moment was the most serene of my life.

I think we may believe that, if we could believe it of no other man. At the fourth attempt "I succeeded by the utmost care in keeping her upright while I hauled myself into her and with one of the oars, which I had recovered, paddled to the shore." And then no rest, for he had to carry out the second part of the cable, secure it to the first, and bring back the end to the sloop—"a small matter." Small, indeed, for two men working in concert, but what a labour for one, exhausted, half-drowned, or as the Captain puts it "somewhat the worse for wear and pretty full of salt water" !

Small wonder that, resting on the shore in the sun, he watched almost idly while a Uruguayan boy rode down to the shore, and, attaching his horse to the *Spray*, did what he could to haul her ashore for his own.

After this, there was only one other small "incident" on the way to the Horn.

One day, well off the Patagonian coast, while the sloop was reaching under short sail, a tremendous wave, the culmination, it seemed, of many waves, rolled down upon her in a storm, roaring as it came. I had only a moment to get all sail down [one wonders how he was able to do it at all], and myself up on the peak halyards, when I saw the mighty crest towering mast-head high above me. The mountain of water submerged my vessel. She shook in every timber, and reeled under the weight of the sea, but rose quickly out of it, and rode grandly over the rollers that followed. It may have been a minute that from my hold in the rigging I could see no part of the *Spray's* hull. Perhaps it was even less time than that, but it seemed a long while. . . .

But this wave is chiefly remarkable because it extracted from Slocum a unique confession. "The incident," he says "which filled me with fear, was only one more test of the *Spray's* sea-worthiness."

And to that key all his story is pitched. In his own achievement no hint of conceit, save sometimes when he has to speak of amateurs—and no true sailor can resist a dig at them, when occasion serves. But no praise is too high for the sole companion of his adventures, the beloved *Spray*.

On February 11th "we" entered the Straits of Magellan, and began the long battle with the Horn. The "first" passage of the Straits was completed in three weeks, three weeks of wearisome beating against wind and current, battered by gales, anchoring and weighing, anchoring and weighing, with all the fatigue and strain that these operations mean for a crew of one. The shore, bleak and barren, where no trees could grow for the wind, gave him neither shelter or companionship; if he anchored under the lee of a mountain, a fierce "williwaw"* or squall came

down the side of it, and whisked the sloop away, anchor and all, and if it fell calm, there was then "the greatest danger of the whole voyage," the savages of Tierra del Fuego, prowling upon him in canoes, by night or day.

This danger he confronted in characteristic fashion. The wind falling light one day, a fleet of canoes came up with him.

Now I was not for letting on that I was alone, and so I stepped into the cabin, and, passing through the hold, came out at the fore-scuttle, changing my clothes as I went along. That made two men. Then the piece of the bowsprit which I had sawed off at Buenos Aires, and which I had on board, I arranged forward on the outlook, dressed as a seaman, attaching a line by which I could pull it into motion. That made three of us . . .

Watching the elements all day, he could not watch for savages all night, but strewed the deck with carpet tacks, and was awakened in good time by the yells of anguished scalp-hunters; after which they boarded the *Spray* no more.

So at last he came within sight of the Pacific. "Here I felt the throb of the great ocean that lay before me. I knew now that I had put a world behind me, and that I was opening out another world ahead."

And the very next day that world was as far away as ever. For he had not cleared the land before a tempest came down from the North-West, and blew him back, as he thought, round the Horn again. "Knowing that this storm might continue for many days, and that it would be impossible to work back to the westward along the coast outside of Tierra del Fuego, there seemed nothing to do but to keep on and go east about, after all"—that is, go round the world the other way! And in this cruel disappointment, scudding alone before the storm, his mainsail in tatters, his plans in a like state, we need not doubt that his reflections were as cool and proud as his written words.

She was running now with a reefed fore-stay-sail . . . I paid out two long ropes to steady her course and to break coming seas astern, and I lashed the helm amidship. In this trim she ran before it, shipping never a sea. Even while the storm raged at its worst, my ship was wholesome and noble.

At nightfall on the fourth day of this gale, he saw land dimly, and made for it, thinking it to be the Falkland Islands.

Night closed in before the sloop reached the land, leaving her feeling her way in pitchy darkness. I saw breakers ahead before long. At this I wore ship and stood offshore, but was immediately startled by the tremendous roaring of breakers, again ahead and on the lee bow. This puzzled me, for there should have been no broken water where I supposed myself to be. I kept off a good bit, then wore round, but finding broken water also there, threw her head again offshore. In this way, among dangers, I spent the rest of the night.

* Vividly defined in one of the Captain's less careful phrases—"They were compressed gales of wind that Boreas handed down over the hills in chunks. A full-blown williwaw will throw a ship, even without sail on, over on her beam ends."

"In this way, among dangers" . . . Bewildered, lost, among dangers unknown and inexplicable, unable to do anything but double back and forth in that roaring circle of breakers, aimlessly recoiling from wall to wall, like a rat caught in a yard, like the prisoner in *The Pit and the Pendulum*, in the darkness, exhausted, hungry and alone. But I fancy Slocum enjoyed it all.

Hail and sleet in the fierce squalls cut my face; but what of that? It was daylight, and the sloop was in the midst of the Milky Way* of the Sea, which is north-west of Cape Horn; and it was the white breakers of a huge sea over sunken rocks which had threatened to engulf her through the night . . . It was not the time to complain of a broken skin. What could I do but feel a way among the breakers and find a channel between them, now that it was day? Since she had escaped the rocks through the night, surely she would find her way by daylight. This was the greatest sea adventure of my life. God knows how my vessel escaped.

That night found him at anchor again in the Magellan Straits, at a point passed 16 days earlier; and that night "strangely enough, instead of feeling rested from sitting or lying down, I now began to feel jaded and worn." And that night, when any just man might have claimed from fortune a night unbroken, the savages attacked the *Spray*. But Slocum slept, and the carpet-tacks did their deadly work without him.

All this long episode of the Horn reads more like the *Odyssey* than any book I know—the endless misfortune, the grim humour of misfortune, and the incredible patience of one indomitable man.

The next day he got out his needle and the spare pieces of canvas and began to make a new sail; and the struggle went on, after this fashion:—

I saw no more savages, that day or the next, but . . . I had no sooner got to work at sail-making again, after the anchor was down, than the wind, as on the day before, picked the sloop up and flung her seaward with a vengeance, anchor and all, as before . . . I kept on sailing in hope, since I had no choice but to go on, heading across for St. Nicholas Bay, where I had cast anchor February 19th. It was now the 10th of March! . . .

Farther along in the bay was the anchorage, which I managed to reach, but before I could get the anchor down another squall caught the sloop and whirled her round like a top, and carried her away. Still further to leeward was a great headland, and I bore off for that. This was retracing my course, for the gale was from South-West.

I had the sloop soon under control, however, and in a short time rounded-to under the lee of a mountain, where the sea was as smooth as a mill-pond, and the sails flapped and hung limp while she carried her way close in. Here I thought I would anchor and rest till morning, the depth being eight fathoms very close to the shore. But it was interesting to see [says the Captain drily], as I let go the anchor, that it did not reach the bottom before another williwaw struck down from this mountain and carried the sloop off faster than I could pay out cable. Therefore, instead of

* Of which Darwin wrote:—"Any landsman seeing the Milky Way would have nightmare for a week."

resting, I had to "man the windlass" and heave up the anchor with fifty fathoms of cable hanging up and down in deep water. This was in that part of the Strait called Famine Reach.

At the sloop's crab windlass I worked the rest of the night, thinking how much easier it was for me when I could say "Do that thing or the other" than now doing all myself. But I hove away, and sang the old chants that I sang when I was a sailor. Within the last few days I had passed through much, and I was thankful that my state was no worse.

Only those perhaps, who are acquainted with sailing craft will appreciate the skill, tenacity and cruel toil, which were demanded in emergencies of this kind of a crew of one. But they, however small their experience, will find these pages full of miracles. If they have ever helped to take in a reef in a gale, they will have a picture of the *Spray* in the Straits of Gibraltar, with the Moorish pirate overhauling him and the gale increasing, so that he must reef quickly or be lost: they will understand his predicament in those other Straits, when the savages crept upon him at anchor, and

I was put to my wits' end as to how I should weigh anchor, for through an accident to the windlass I could not budge it. *However, I set all sail and filled away, first hauling short by hand . . .* I worked till blood started from my fingers [still hauling at the anchor, while she sailed] and with one eye over my shoulder for savages. I watched at the same time, and sent a bullet whistling whenever I saw a limb or a twig move . . . As it was, my own blood was all that was spilt, and from the trifling accident of sometimes breaking the flesh against a cleat or a pin which came in the way when I was in haste. Sea-cuts in my hands from pulling on hard wet ropes were sometimes painful and often bled freely; but these healed when I finally got away from the strait into fine weather.

After many such trials he came through to a harbour on the West, where the mast of the *Spray* received an arrow from a savage and was afterwards entangled in a tree, a thing which has happened to sailors nearer home. Six times he left this harbour, and was driven back; but at the seventh attempt he sailed clear into the Pacific on April 13th, 40 days since he first felt the throb of the Pacific and knew that he was opening out another world ahead.

So to Juan Fernandez, where he visited Robinson Crusoe's cave, fittingly enough, and taught the inhabitants to make buns with tallow, a great quantity of which he had found time to salve—shrewd trader that he was—from the shores of the Strait.

Then away across the Pacific to Samoa—72 days without land, 72 days alone. "On the 43rd day out from land—a long time to be alone"—he made the Marquesas Islands, and could have put in there as well as not. But he chose to turn that seven weeks' solitude into ten, and pressed on for Samoa. The trade-winds carried him smoothly; he sailed with a free wind day after day, the helm lashed, the *Spray* keeping her course. He read his books, and mended his clothes, and with his tin

clock and simple calculations, daily marked off upon the chart another slice of the world. (There is not mention of tobacco.)

For one whole month my vessel held her course true [with no man at the wheel] I had not, the whole time, so much as a light in the binnacle. The Southern Cross I saw every night abeam. The sun every morning came up astern: every evening it went down ahead. I wished for no other compass, for these were true.

In all these days he saw no other ship.

I had already found that it was not good to be alone, and so I made companionship with what there was around me, sometimes with the universe, and sometimes with my own insignificant self; but my books were always my friends. Nothing could be easier or more restful than my voyage in the trade-winds.

So he says. But for us the puzzle remains. For Slocum was no natural hermit, seeking solitude for itself, but loved company, and the talk of old sailor-friends, and was full of humour and no hater of women. All this becomes clear whenever he touches land, as it is clear that he did suffer from loneliness at sea. Earlier, of the fourth day out from America, in a passage which has the touch of unconscious art, he writes:—

About midnight the fog shut down again denser than ever before It continued so for a number of days, the wind increasing to a gale. The waves rose high, but I had a good ship. Still, in the dismal fog I felt myself drifting into loneliness, an insect on a straw in the midst of the elements. I lashed the helm, and my vessel held her course, and while she sailed I slept The loneliness of my state wore off when the gale was high and I found much work to do. When fine weather returned, then came the sense of solitude, which I could not shake off. I used my voice often, at first giving some order about the affairs of a ship, for I had been told that from disuse I should lose my speech. At the meridian altitude of the sun I called aloud "Eight Bells," after the custom of a ship at sea. Again from my cabin I cried to an imaginary man at the helm "How does she head there?" and again "Is she on her course?" But getting no reply, I was reminded the more palpably of my condition. My voice sounded hollow on the empty air, and I dropped the practice. And again of the last night in the River at Rio :

It was when I anchored in the lonely places that a feeling of awe crept over me. At the last anchorage on the monotonous and muddy river, weak as it may seem, I gave way to my feelings. I resolved then that I would anchor no more North of the Strait of Magellan.

And of leaving that desolate region, he says :

Throughout the whole of the strait West of Cape Froward I saw no animals except dogs owned by savages There was a sort of swan, smaller than a Muscovy duck, which might have been brought down with the gun, but in the loneliness of life about the dreary country I found myself in no mood to make one life less, except in self-defence.

But out at sea there was life, of a kind. There were sea-birds always; and he saw whales; and porpoises kept him company for weeks together, for "porpoises always prefer sailing ships;" and he loved to watch the flying fish; and there were two spiders aboard.

And, above all, there was the *Spray*. It is a commonplace, none the less true, that a ship is more nearly alive than anything that man has made. There is a pride in the personal performance of a sailing vessel, great or small, which never stales; there is a delight in the sensation of sailing, in the actual handling of the vessel, which endures for ever but is fresh every day. Those who ride horses will understand this, for that is the only thing that is like it by land. And Slocum had this enjoyment, above all zest for adventure or pride in his achievement. "Her mast now bent under a strong, steady pressure, and her bellying sail swept the sea as she rolled scuppers under, curtsying to the waves. These rolling waves thrilled me as they tossed my ship, passing quickly under her keel. This was grand sailing."

And this delight and pride in his craft, keen out of the common because he had built her himself, is, I think, the real key to the great mystery of this voyage—how did he endure the loneliness? He was not alone as a man would be alone in a solitary march across a desert, or climbing a bare mountain without companion. He had the *Spray* for friend, as a traveller by land might make a friend of his horse or dog; and she was as alive, as faithful, and beloved.

So we may understand that in those peaceful days of the trade-winds, and later in the sunny cruises among the South Sea Islands, he never felt the grip of solitude as it first closed upon him in the Atlantic. He had learned the habit of it. With the sun aloft and the sea a great shimmer of lively blue, with Robinson Crusoe's island astern and R. L. Stevenson's island ahead, with the ship moving merrily and an enchanting ripple at the bows, many of us may imagine ourselves finding content. But this was but a fragment of the voyage. What of the sunless days, the less constant waters? What of the nights? The dusk, when the wind falls, and the sails flap disconsolate; the boat rolls clumsily in the swell, and the boom swings fretfully from side to side; the sea is empty and silent; look where you will in the vast distance, no ship or sign of man is to be seen; and the light fades, and the horizon closes in upon the tiny boat; and away to the West, blotting out the last glow, great inky clouds come out of the sea and slowly mount the sky. Still all the air is quiet; but in the menacing hush the boat is full of noises, creaking and complaining as the boom swings over and blocks rattle against the spars. The clouds swell and gather till half the sky is cloud; and as darkness creeps across the water, a faint breath comes suddenly from nowhere, and the boat shivers and is alive again, like a frightened animal. The night has begun, and the whole night is before you; and who knows what the night will bring, a breeze, a hurricane, a merry run, a wreck? Then, if a man has company, if he is taking his holiday on the sea, not far from home, he may cheerfully make ready for the storm, enjoying the spice of it: though even then it is strange if he does not shiver secretly in the chill of the evening, and feel himself "an insect on a straw," a child at the mercy of a monster. But who in the world can picture himself

content to be alone at this hour, alone in middle ocean at the fall of night, day by day, for seventy days together? This remains the greatest marvel of Slocum's voyage, which nothing in his book explains.

After the Horn, by comparison, it was roses all the way. At Samoa, after the 70 days, he arrived about noon, and even then was in no haste to tread the land. "My vessel being moored I spread an awning and instead of going at once on shore I sat under it till late in the evening, listening with delight to the musical cries of the Samoan men and women." He was nobly entertained by Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson, which thrilled him, for many of the Tales had been his companions across the Pacific. But, modest man, when invited to write his letters at "the old desk—I thought it would be presumptuous to do that; it was sufficient for me to enter the hall," where Stevenson used to sit.

Then a forty-two days run to New South Wales, "mostly of storms and gales." Here, and in Tasmania, the roses grew thickly. His fame had circled the world before him, and every arrival meant an ovation. The feasting and the friendliness he frankly enjoyed, but kept his head and his simplicity.

From Tasmania he travelled East and North of Australia, safely picking his way through the coral reefs of the Great Barrier.

Then Thursday Island, and the Keeling Cocos Islands, a run of 23 days, of which he spent only 3 hours at the helm, a technical marvel, which yachtsmen at least will appreciate. "I just lashed the helm and let her go; whether the wind was abeam or dead aft, it was all the same; she always sailed on her course." Keeling he describes as a Paradise. It was of these Islands that Admiral Fitzroy of the *Beagle* remarked, "Here crabs eat cokernuts, fish eat coral, dogs catch fish, men ride on turtles, and shells are dangerous man-traps," adding that the greater part of the sea-fowl roost on branches, and many rats make their nests in the tops of palm-trees. He loaded up with shell, and went on to Rodriguez (2,000 miles only); and here "the good abbé, a few days before, had been telling his people about the coming of Antichrist; and when they saw the *Spray* sail into the harbour, all feather-white before a gale of wind, and run all standing upon the beach, and with only one man aboard, they cried 'May the Lord help us! it is he, and he has come in a boat!' which I say would have been the most improbable way of his coming." The little town was in great commotion, and one elderly woman made for her house and locked herself in, declining to come out till Antichrist departed, eight days later.

Then Mauritius, and on to Durban. In South Africa he had a royal time, met the explorer Stanley, and was visited by a deputation of Professors from President Kruger. These three scholars were preparing a work to support their ruler's contention that the earth is flat, and looked to Slocum for valuable evidence. Later he visited Oom Paul himself, but was unhappily introduced by Judge Beyers as the man who was sailing round the world.

Mr. Kruger corrected the judge rather sharply "You don't mean *round* the world" said the president "it is impossible! You mean *in* the world. Impossible," he said "Impossible!" and not another word did he utter either to the judge or me My friend the judge seemed embarrassed, but I was delighted: the incident pleased me more than anything else that could have happened.

The *Spray* called next at St. Helena—"a mass of volcanic matter, thrown up from the bed of the ocean. It is a strategic point, and belonged to Great Britain before it got cold" chuckles the Captain. "Porpoises and dolphins, and such other fishes as did not mind making a hundred and fifty miles a day were her companions now for several days She was again among her old friends the flying-fish One could not be lonely in a sea like this" And Slocum was deep in his new books, reading day and night. "March 30 was for me a fast-day in honour of them. I read on [*The Inland Voyage*], oblivious of hunger or wind or sea."

He was heading now for home; and three years after her departure from America the *Spray* crossed her outward track from Gibraltar. "I felt a contentment in knowing that the *Spray* had encircled the globe, and even as an adventure alone I was in no way discouraged as to its utility, and said to myself "Let what will happen, the voyage is now on record."

Much was still to happen. At St. Helena he had been presented with a goat, which devoured, among other things, his chart of the West Indies, and exposed him to some of the gravest navigational dangers of the voyage. And just north of the Equator he learned of a new peril. America and Spain were at war. An American battleship, passing, asked "Are there any [Spanish] men of war about?" to which the *Spray* made the signals "No. Let us keep together for mutual protection," which Captain Clark did not seem to regard as necessary. Nevertheless, Slocum pondered very seriously the chance that the Spaniards would get him at last, after he "had cleared all, or nearly all the dangers of the seas; but finally a strong hope mastered my fears."

And on the last run northward from the West Indies, the sea strove desperately to beat him on the post. Two gales in three days; and a serious mishap to the *Spray*, when "the jibstay broke at the mast-head, and fell, jib and all, into the sea." This meant a long and difficult labour in the heaving sea, possibly disaster, for a single man; and "Neptune tested me severely at the time" says the Captain mildly "for, the stay being gone, the mast itself switched about like a reed, and was not easy to climb."

And Slocum now was a tired and lonely man. "I was at last tired, tired, tired of baffling squalls and fretful cobble-seas. I had not seen a vessel for days and days, where I had expected the company of at least a schooner now and then. As to the whistling of the wind through the rigging, and the slopping of the sea against the sloop's sides, that was

well enough in its way, and we could not have got on without it, the *Spray* and I; but there was so much of it now, and it lasted so long!"

Still, he was only two days out from home, and all that remained was a tornado, which greeted him off Fire Island. "The sloop, under bare poles, shivered when it struck her, and heeled over unwillingly on her beam-ends; but rounding to, with a sea-anchor ahead, she righted and faced out the storm. In the midst of the gale I could do no more than look on, for what is a man in a storm like this? . . . When all was over, I rose, made sail, and made for a quiet harbour to think the matter out."

And Newport harbour was mined.

So finished this "cruise" of 46,000 miles, after three years and two months. And on July 3rd, 1898, he sailed up the coast and "secured the *Spray* to the cedar spile driven in the bank to hold her when she was launched. I could bring her no nearer home."

I hope that none who read this sketch of his story will fail to make fuller acquaintance with this great man in his book, a great and lovable man, unworldly, simple and reverent, a philosopher, a lover beauty of and of men. My purpose has been to do him greater justice than his modesty permitted him to do himself. It is odd, and wrong, that every boy should not know and honour the name of Slocum, as they know the names of Shackleton and Peary. As for the Odyssey, I suppose the *Spray* was nearly the size of Ulysses' ship, and her adventures were not less wonderful and strange, though she had no Homer. Indeed, she was not much different in any way, neither she, nor her sails, nor the skill that handled her, which is a thought of great comfort in this shifting, whirling, wireless world we know. More than any other material thing, a boat links together the generations of men, and changes least along the ages. Sailing-ships are dead; and we travel now in palaces across the sea. And why not? For men still travel on the wind in vessels like the *Spray*, and in them, the delicious madmen, strike out across the ocean. The small boat, the fisherman, the careless amateur—these are the last links now, but they will remain. Men will never cease to ride horses, I suppose, though the sky be full of flying men; and the craft of sailing and the glory of it, will endure as long as the wind blows. And if some judgment should sweep away this brittle civilisation of ours—our science, our machines, our memories—it will not be long before some bold spirit hoists a rude sail in a boat, and sails away to find a better land; and he, and Slocum, and Ulysses will be one. For here is something eternal in the life of man, as lasting as love and the worship of God. Therefore, read Slocum and be thankful,

Captain Slocum was not content with circling the world. He sailed away a second time alone in the *Spray*. And he has been never been heard of again. Of any ordinary man one would say that the sea had him at last. But I prefer to hope that his luck still holds, and on some desolate island the Captain sits with his jack-knife, serene and hopeful, patiently building a new *Spray*.

A BURNING OF BOATS

By DAME ETHEL SMYTH, Mus. Doc.

NOT so long a group of Mrs. Swynnerton's friends were discussing the honour recently bestowed on her, among them a celebrated painter who began telling us about his visit of congratulation to the new A.R.A.

"The place was swarming with reporters and photographers," he said, "and the strange thing was" (here his eyes grew round with amazement) "she seemed actually to be *enjoying* the rumpus!"

Like most brilliantly successful people, the speaker had long since reduced the evading of camp-followers to a fine art. But as Mrs. Swynnerton's portion had been life-long neglect tempered with streaks of infuriating patronage, this delight in outward and visible signs of eleventh-hour recognition seemed to me infinitely touching, and I said so.

"All the same it rather suprised me" he answered "for she really is a tremendous swell."

"I know" I said, "I remember your declaring 20 years ago that no one alive could paint like Mrs. Swynnerton."

Here someone remarked that he had probably worked the oracle. "Oh no," he said lightly, "I was abroad at the time; in fact I knew nothing about it till I saw it in the papers"—and one silently wondered for the millionth time how those at the top of the tree can refrain from shaking and belabouring official bodies till they open their sham-exclusive doors to the unrecognised deserving. I spoke of the Order of Merit withheld from Florence Nightingale till she was long past realising what was going forward: "Why wait," I asked, "till an artist has reached an age when most people's best work is behind them?"

"Well, well" said one I call the Professor, a delightful man connected with a big School of Painting, "there's something rather beautiful in recognition coming long after people have ceased to look for it—a blaze of sunset glory!"

It was not the moment for scathing comment on this convenient theory, but later on I got my chance. The Professor, who had learned from me earlier in the day that women were being turned out of orchestras, though no one contends they do not play as well as men, began assuring me that nothing of the sort happened at the School: "no sex-prejudice there!" he said. I took leave to wonder if the girl-students would endorse that statement, and asked about two pictures I had recently seen at an Exhibition. "Ah! I'm glad you noticed them," he said, "they are by a very talented girl who I've been able to help about getting her work hung. And do you know its surprising how the

success she is having has increased her powers; the stuff she is turning out now is simply amazing."

We were alone; this time the Professor was not let off, but invited to put a belated A.R.A. in one scale, and a fifty years' struggle against discouragement, poverty, ill-health, and all the concomitants of unrecognised genius in the other. "What, pray," I asked, in a fine lyrical outburst, "are rays of sunset glory compared to the midday sunshine that may turn a promising seedling into the finest plant ever grown!"

For the moment he saw it. But few people are willing to exchange a pleasant for an unpleasant reflection; and no doubt next day, once more yielding to æsthetic pleasure in an "effect," he was remarking to someone else how well inspired the Council had been in keeping back that particular laurel-wreath till the year 1923!

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One morning, shortly after the above conversation, I became aware that even as a bean will suddenly pierce the soil, so an important truth had suddenly sprung up, fully fledged, in my mind; namely, that not only our views, but our actual perceptions, are in nine cases out of ten second-hand. We believe ourselves to be looking at or listening to something when in reality we are using the eyes and ears of others; our conclusions are not, therefore, as we fondly believe, the result of our own observation but of preconceived ideas.

Take an experience familiar to average frequenters of Picture Galleries. You stare at what seems to be a study of worms, or perhaps they are loose strands of vermicelli; gradually the lines resolve themselves into a bank upon which recline two naked women—evidently great friends and apparently feeding each other with dust. Slightly nauseated you pass on. But what if, personally conducted by either of the men above mentioned, you are introduced to this sketch as a superb drawing by Augustus John? Unconsciously your mind attunes itself to appreciativeness, if possible to admiration. Knowing you *ought* to admire you are not looking at that drawing with unbiassed eyes. And a very little reflection will show us that were we not perpetually taking all sorts of things for granted, this world would be pandemonium.

What I regret is that no one helped me to understand all this years ago, when I first realised that in the world of music, as also, judging by Mrs. Swynnerton, in the world of painting, none but very exceptional men can perceive a woman's work at all. I must have been "warm," as the children say, when, in 1891, as elsewhere recounted, I showed my *Mass in D* to the great Hermann Levi, and met his ejaculation: "I never could have believed a woman wrote that!" with "No!—and what's more, in a week's time you *won't* believe it!" By which I meant that once I and my MS. had left Munich, he would come to fancy he must have been carried off his feet! But it has taken me a lifetime to learn how hard preconceived notions die.

My present aim is to point out that until woman after woman has emerged in the front rank of music, as they have already done in literature, no woman-composer can expect objective treatment. Between the perceiver and the thing perceived rises like a mist the thought: "There never have been great women composers—and *there never will be.*" I believe my own story, which I can tell without animus since I feel none, will prove this contention. Meanwhile, as some think my written word will live, and as a few foreigners—and even here and there an Englishman—believe the same of my music, I want to put on record, that but for possessing independent means, excellent health, and a fair share of the fighting instinct proper to a "Bengal Military Orphan," I should have gone under musically years ago. And I should also like to say that these pages would never have been written did I not hope they may be of use to the on-coming generation of women-composers, who, in perpetual conflict with what looks like, and sometimes is, studied unfairness, have a long struggle against bitterness before them. These may be as glad as I was to realise that not only is most of this unfairness sub-conscious and inevitable, but that a large part of our own mental operations are carried on in a similar spirit of unenlightened *parti-pris*.

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About 1889, my time of probation in Germany over, I returned to England armed with two volumes of songs, a violin sonata, a 'cello sonata (all these published) besides various MS. works now lost, string quartets, cantatas, etc. Some of these had been publicly produced in Germany. but no one here would look at them. With orchestral work I had better luck, for that great friend of budding composers, Auguste Manns, produced a *Serenade* and an *Overture to Anthony and Cleopatra* with great artistic success. My friend George Henschel followed Manns' lead—and there was the end of that. The cry being for "something new" I obliged, but without practical results.

I then wrote my Mass. I have told elsewhere by what strenuous efforts, including the supreme occasion on which I played it to the old Queen at Balmoral, the Royal Choral Society were at last persuaded to produce it at the Albert Hall. The execution was splendid, so was the reception by Press and Public, and Messrs. Novello published it. Nevertheless three years later I was still searching England for a Choral Society willing to embark on a second performance. I had imagined one of the Three Choirs would jump at a Mass. *O sancta simplicitas!* These are strictly preserved areas, and to this day I do not know the ropes. But I do know that, as woman, one could more easily scale the walls of Holloway Prison than get a footing in these nurseries of Choral Art! Eventually, as England had no room for me, and as Levi had always maintained I had a vocation for music-drama, I turned my thoughts to Opera and Germany.

Some day certain chapters in a new batch of *Streaks of Life* may deal with this epoch. Here I will take up my tale in the early years of this

century, when, fortified by certain happenings in Germany, I made another attack on England.

There was now a new feeling in the air; the suffrage question had cast ominous shadows on male monopolies, the competition of women had become an economic factor, and presently I found myself be-hung with a label—that innocent-looking label that has been the bane of my life, from which I have not yet shaken myself free ! I was not a composer among composers, but a *lady* composer. And as, of course, no woman could possibly write music of her own, it became a habit never to mention mine without reference to some plagiarised victim—Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, or Wagner, according to the writer's fancy.

In earlier days, when a great musician and great gentleman gave the tone to the musical press, this label would have been unthinkable. After all, the Mass and *Der Wald* were solid facts, and Fuller Maitland would have thought it misleading to drag a red herring across the path when discussing music of a certain calibre ; not cricket, in fact, or shall we say not noble sport ?

No doubt many use the term "lady composer" in all innocence. As I pointed out to an exasperated friend of mine, who in Paris is "le peintre N.L." but here becomes "brother of the Earl of X," side-issues are to the journalist what the shallow end of the swimming bath is to the timid bather—a place in which you can splash about finely without risk of drowning. But if anyone will clear his mind of cant for one moment he must surely perceive, that as long as there have been no great women composers, to put you in that class is to imply that your work is fifteenth-rate; compliments addressed to you on these lines are therefore worthless and offensive. Surely that is logic ?

I will not allude in this place to certain performances in London of my operas—gallant scrambles without a morrow—but confine myself to the concert room where not a soul except Henry Wood ever played me. (Well do I remember Sir Edgar Speyer informing me that the attractiveness of a programme was lessened by the inclusion of my work—that he hoped, therefore, my friends would take lots of tickets!) Later on Dan Godfrey followed suit, and later still Thomas Beecham, who, as I shall not forget, is the only Englishman who has taken my music across the Channel. But with him I think it was a case of personal friendship, whereas the other two, whom I scarcely knew, simply treated me like any other English composer.

About 1909, being still without a publisher, I threw down a challenge, and gave two concerts of my own works. This time I seemed to have got into the open at last ; so astounding was the Press, words like "strong," "magnificent," "inspired," even "original," being freely bandied about, that I had excerpts printed and sent round to all the old addresses. Alas ! my glory was short-lived ! From that day to this, the L.S.O., whom I had engaged for both these concerts, has not performed a note of my music, nor has the Philharmonic, except once or thrice in

response to the threats of a female guarantor! The very conductor of the acting Choir ignored my suggestion of repeating some of the choruses at his own concerts, and, worst of all, the Press, as if to make up for previous indiscretion, pulled itself sharply together. Once more it became impossible to speak of work of mine without dragging in my sex and the name of a pilfered composer; in a word, the label, which had begun to work loose, was firmly stuck down again.

It was a vicious circle. If your work has only relative value why should conductors take the trouble to perform it? If it is never performed how can you blame the Press for considering it negligible? and if, owing to all this, you can't get a publisher—Checkmate! No doubt other English composers have had their difficulties, but once a man gets his head above water he can turn on his back and float. I have struggled to the surface half a dozen times, only to be dragged under again by the dead weight of all the label stands for.

Think it out. What does the saying "nothing succeeds like success" mean? It means, among other things, that once people believe it is the correct thing to admire, their frame of mind becomes receptive (see my parable of the vermicelli women). A public thus tuned readily performs its allotted part in an act of collaboration, the admired one has a chance of becoming a financial proposition, and so the snowball grows.

And now consider what happens when someone who genuinely enjoyed your music last night is told next morning in so many words that it is second-rate stuff. What damping down of enthusiasm! What instant reversal of a determination to hear more of that composer's work! Upon my word, when I reflect how the public's very natural distrust of women's music has been systematically reinforced all down these years by the voice of authority, how all my life I have been damned by the faint praise which is all a "premier lady composer" deserves, I marvel that anyone ever comes to hear my music at all!

Only the other day, after Dorothy Howell's triumph with her new Piano Concerto, I found in my newspaper an ungrudgingly appreciative notice—which however ended thus: "*in fact Miss Howell has now taken a prominent place among our women composers.*" Is it conceivable that the writer did not see he was giving praise with one hand to snatch, or rather filch, it back with the other? Anyhow that sentence stiffened an ancient, difficult resolve to write something like what I am writing to-day.

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It would much distress me to be thought ungrateful by certain good friends on the Press who no doubt believe honestly they have done me justice. May I issue a challenge? Will they read the following estimates by eminent foreign colleagues of theirs, and ask themselves whether official opinion in my own country has ever spoken, *could* ever speak, of a woman in the same strain?

In 1908 I gave a chamber-music concert in Paris—my one and only French enterprise; here are significant comments by two of the most highly honoured among French critics.

This revelation of a *real musical personality* of English race is all the more remarkable in that *up to now the compatriots of Purcell have shown nothing but eminent gifts of assimilation*; these songs or poems are of a charming melodic invention, of a strongly marked yet free rhythm, intense in colouring and full of the most exquisite poetry. *La Danse*, which was encored, illustrates one of the composer's most precious qualities, an unfailing picturesqueness, whether in the treatment of things joyous, or, as in *Odelette*, of the pangs and languors of love, all of which moods are depicted by her with equal intensity. It would not surprise us if the *originality of her work* gives a new direction to the art of her country.—ROBERT BRUSSEL, *Figaro*, June 6th, 1908.

This English nation, so strong, so alive, so original, produces the most colourless, "fade" music in the world, in short, the music least typical of the race; most of it is of the Mendelssohn, Gounod, or Brahms school; some have leaned latterly towards Debussy and our younger school; but up to now *it is impossible to affirm that English composers have produced music in which one can distinguish the expression of an original feeling; with one sole exception, Ethel Smyth!*

I do not mean to say her music is free from all foreign influence; in the delicate, seductively vital works, interpenetrated with poetic grace which we have just heard, the melodic invention seems almost meridional, even "mediterranean" to use Nietzsche's term; we find there even a delicate flavour of Hellenism—a new instance of the subtle cosmopolitanism that has ever characterised high English culture in poetry and painting. But these elements are blended in a *personality so intense and individual* as to fuse and re-cast them all; and the result is music that *only an English composer could have written*, and that marks a *new departure in English music life*.—PIERRE LALO, *Le Temps*, June 20th, 1908.

Or turn to Richard Batka's *Kritiken und Skizzen*, where an examination of the vocal score of *The Wreckers* concludes thus:

The impression this music gives one can be thus summed up; that England, which in Purcell's time was one of the great musical peoples, is once more destined to play an "obligato" part in the World-Symphony.

Or take this. In 1911 I was in Vienna, where at last I found a publisher willing, in spite of the label, to take up my music, and where two choruses of mine were produced. The one here referred to is *Hey Nonny No*:

In its *vastness, its overwhelming strength, this amazing work* sums up, both as to text and setting, all the hunger and intoxication of life, all the contemptuous braving of death characteristic of the Elizabethan epoch. *Every fibre in this composer's being is music—music that seems to have streamed through the deepest part of her country's soul* and absorbed all its peculiar atmosphere and fascination; the sea with its salt breath, the hard wind blowing over white chalk cliffs, the velvet dunes, the steel-like quality of those strange islanders—so straightforward and yet so full of secret passions—*all this is in her music*, steeped in the peculiar softness and sentiment of her race.—*Neue Freie Presse*, 16th April, 1911.

Finally in the Austrian Musical Review, *Der Merker*, of December, 1912, Bruno Walter wrote an article on my work, part of which was quoted in *The Times*. We see his deeply philosophical mind busy with the sex question; but with what intelligence he ponders it, to brush it aside as irrelevant up to the present moment!

I consider Ethel Smyth a composer of quite special significance, who is *certain of a permanent place in musical history*. *Genuine musical productivity* is so rare, that we are entitled to ask whether the impression of *originality* created by these compositions is not attributable to their femininity? But though our ears are trained to immediately detect national differences in music, we are too inexperienced to detect sex characteristics. If we had a hundred female composers we might be able to establish a distinction between male and female music. But though, above all else, her music is *English* through and through, personally I am convinced that its thematic charm proceeds essentially from the composer's womanhood. The sex question is however comparatively unimportant *in the presence of a talent so strong, thematic invention so original, a temperament so deep and warm*. This I was glad to see recognised by her striking success with the Viennese public, and I believe that her work is destined *permanently to succeed*, though as always happens with *true originality*, its recognition will only come gradually and *in the teeth of opposition*—*Times*, December 23rd, 1912.

The only thing these judges did not foresee was the *quality* of opposition that would have to be faced. A label has no teeth, nor is there anything fierce about calling you a woman. So you are, aren't you?—Well then?—Anyhow it may be imagined what judgments such as these—whether uttered by people I do not know, like Lalo and Brüssel, or by a supreme musician, like Walter—meant at times when it seemed as if one must be the victim of a colossal illusion. Yet even more to me, perhaps, have been stray tributes from utterly simple, uncultured people, like an old North Country woman who said to me years and years ago: "That music seemed talking to you; it made me want to cry, it did!" How surprised she would have been to learn that her words became a talisman clung to in bad times.

Often have I been near despair: after those two concerts for instance; after the travesty of *The Wreckers* at Covent Garden; after the shattering, scattering connection with the glorious suffrage fight—a fight no woman could stand aside from with honour, but it broke up the artist in me for the time; worst of all when the simultaneous performance of *The Wreckers* at Munich (under Walter) and the *première* of *The Bosun* at Frankfort, was knocked on the head by the War. How I had counted on the wave from this double splash to wash off the label! Then came *The Bosun*, produced in London, to be dropped again as a half success; followed by an illness that seemed to herald an inevitable good-bye to music.

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To conclude this rapid drowning-man's-survey of a lifetime; if the process called "coming into your own" seems to have begun at last, it

is owing to extraneous circumstances. Firstly: my *Memoirs*, written during that period when music was out of the question, kindled curiosity as to this writer's compositions, which no one had ever heard. Secondly: on the strength of that, I re-scored *The Bosun* for tiny orchestra, and, with the enthusiastic consent of Miss Baylis, re-started it myself in the only London Theatre where there is a trained, permanent Opera public that exercises independent judgment and probably never studies Press criticism! Were it possible, I would rather play *The Wreckers* to that audience than to any in England. Thirdly: by Sir Henry Wood's advice I took to conducting my own music, which resulted in constant invitations to visit the Provinces, whereby the boycott was partially circumvented.

But only partially. In January, 1922, I was made a D.B.E.; and whether because the Three Choirs still exercised a fatal fascination, or because my exclusion galled me, I wrote a civil letter to the Authority in charge of the next event due—a composer, they say, who rehearses his own music with meticulous care. I trust it is on a higher plane than his manners, for he never even answered my letter. The L.S.O. did, at long last, put into their scheme an orchestral work I had presented to their Library (by request) years ago; but it was swept out again by a great musician and lady's-man not unconnected with that Institution—a creature so chivalrous that he calls us all “darling,” even when we have reached the canonical age. Alas! I ought to have known that in the opinion of many such, the proper place of a woman may, or may not, be somebody's knee, but it would improbably be the composer's desk!

The Festival boycott yielded a little, however, in that *Hey Nonny No* was performed that year at Leeds—a work concerning which Walter had remarked “I don't think your English critics can say *that* is not your own!” Wait a little.

The story of that performance—“quite an innovation,” as one reporter naively remarked—is *typical of what has gone on all my life*. The Committee, who presumed the D.B.E. must surely stand for something, were unanimous for including the chorus; so I believed, was the presiding genius of the festival, the very musician just alluded to, whose exact words to me had been, “of course I'll back you, darling!” Nevertheless to win the day took ten months of letter-writing, telegraphing, travelling (a huge outlay) and the unwinking vigilance of one or two watchers, people of power in music and elsewhere, who, knowing the Committee's wishes, were amazed at a mysterious opposition it seemed impossible to trace to its source, and as determined as I was myself to pull the thing off.

At the eleventh hour the difficulty was got over, so I was told, “with a little tact.” Yes! a little tact preceded by mining and scheming enough to take Gibraltar! And as *Coda* to this story I may add that Walter did our critics gross injustice; the day after the performance I had the gratification of sending him a buff-coloured Press cutting enquiring what

all the "Straussian pother" was about? This was Strauss's first appearance on my list, but since then someone has gone one better, Scriabin having been mentioned in connection with *The Bosun*!! Incredible, but a fact.

Anyhow that (musically) delightful Leeds experience, and one or two others, have shown me that Choral Societies would give me a splendid welcome if only I could get at them. Unfortunately their Committees, music-loving amateurs and business men, are under the thumb of the conductor, generally a local man who is convinced that no woman can be the equal of the exceedingly moderate males whose names you find crawling about programmes all over the country. That Leeds chorus really loved *Hey Nonny*, so did the public; but I have not heard of any Northern choir taking it up again. Conductors, not choirs, decide these matters, and conductors have blocked my line from the first; whether from natural distrust, absence of publisher's pressure, intricate questions of loaves and fishes, or perhaps, underlying all, because of what a friend of mine who has had three husbands and countless admirers once called "the natural antagonism between the sexes." I think almost anyone will hardly credit the fact, that, except Mr. Fagge (once) and Dr. Conrad (once . . . at Hull) *not one single Choral Conductor in Great Britain has ever performed work of mine!*

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I imagine that a worse place than England for pioneering of the sort I have been describing could hardly be found. To begin with the mortar of our race is prejudice—a fact of which, as strong Conservative, I am rather proud. So averse are we to going back on settled convictions, that, judging by certain reputations that still hold good, a dog cannot live down even a *good* name here!

Then on the top of that is the shifting uncertain quality of our music life that so greatly astonishes visitors from the continent. "It has no roots" they say, and they are right. Like Batka I believe there may be a musical Renaissance ahead of us, but the deadly effects of a long period of sterility such as fell on us after Purcell's death cannot be got over in a single generation. Where there is no tradition, and culture but a top-dressing, critical faculty is always at a low ebb; hence the almost pathetic blend of ignorance and arrogance that enables one writer to inform his deeply-impressed readers that Beethoven had no sense of form, and another to call Brahms a sickly sentimentalist. No one *knows*, and all are yearning to be told what to admire and what not—a state of things that may well tempt certain minds to respond with this sort of rubbish. I myself have been asked to name my fee for an article "ragging the classics."

Then again England is the home of what Sir Henry Wood calls the "pet" system—a system so ridiculous that I do not regret being probably the only British composer who is not proclaimed by some little group in some little journal to be the only composer that counts.

Nowhere but in America can the atmosphere be more favourable for that child of mass-suggestion, the Boom. There was an occasion some years ago, when at a given hour, the whole Press was mysteriously moved to admiration such as would have been excessive in the case of Bach, Beethoven, and Wagner rolled into one, and which, I fancy, like a certain rash outlay in tramcars which the L.C.C. cannot go back on now, rather hampers the traffic. At Lourdes such phenomena are carefully stage-managed; in the world of music abroad there would be no doubt whatever as to the motive power employed. But here, alas! these simple innocent methods are out of fashion, and mass-suggestion is the only possible explanation.

When I started my conducting career there was a grand outburst of it; so unanimously was I jeered at and slated, that but for the knowledge that Sir Henry would not urge me to make a fool of myself—and also a sense of sympathy between myself and my agent familiar to all riders—I might have given it up. Now I suppose these severe judges of conducting would allow, that, even if not a finished technician, a conductor-composer *ought* to be able to elicit the essence of his music as no one else can? The singers and orchestral players I deal with, agreeing with Sir Henry, put me in this category; so does everyone else capable of judging, whether amateur or expert, whose opinion, volunteered or solicited, I am acquainted with. How then can one avoid the conclusion that here again prejudice is at work? I daresay some men dislike seeing a woman conduct at all; still more are convinced *a priori* that she can't be doing it well. I fancy, though, that even if I were a man, a certain predilection for conducting more than twenty bars in the same tempo, which is not the fashion nowadays, would be supposed to indicate lack of feeling, or, as some would put it, "a low emission potential." But unfortunately the heart-disease style of beat doesn't suit my music.

Before leaving the subject of conducting, I want to say that all down my life, whether at home or abroad, orchestras have been adorable to me, more especially since I took up conducting. In early days I made many slips, but how they saw me through! True comrades, they give me their best, though acquainted, no doubt, with my views on the subject of women orchestral players. As composer too, I am always safe and happy with these experts across whose desks a whole music civilisation has flitted, and who know us all for what we are. The few English composing colleagues I know have also been invariably friendly, but as maid among the Jacks I feel a little shy in their company.

And now for what is perhaps a confession of weakness. About eighteen months ago, for the second time in my life but this time finally, I gave up Press cuttings. I have even trained myself not to glance at the musical column in my own newspaper, and friends are begged to keep the result of their own glancings to themselves. I do not claim to be cast in a more heroic mould than Byron, who held himself to be a

great poet, which his critics did not, and gave up studying his Press because he saw no use in spoiling the edge of his temper. "What they say" he cried "leaves a *stain* on my mind!"; adding that when evilly entreated you suffer the humiliation of feeling annoyed, when praised the still greater humiliation of feeling gratified.

If I am not as bitter about it as this, it is because in a case like mine no wonder perceptions are blunted by pre-conceptions. And, after all, since Time began, mourners have not been wept with and dancers have failed to respond to the piper, simply because no one saw anything to lament or rejoice about. We are not told that the eyes that were opened on the road to Emmaus had been closed up to that moment from wilfulness, nor even that the adder is guilty of her own deafness.

On the other hand one cannot deny there is such a thing as refusing to see and hear. Goethe tells a charming story of how he and a friend, walking in a garden, suddenly caught sight of two of the other guests embracing in a side-alley. "Did you see that," exclaimed his companion, "can I believe my eyes?" "I saw it," replied Goethe calmly, "*but I don't believe it!*" There are mean and jealous men who, when they see pre-eminence in a woman "don't believe it." But these I think are a small minority in England.

Even so, what a pity that so much time and strength should be wasted in fighting for a hearing! My own moon, I have had to create each separate tide that has lifted each one of my little boats across the harbour-bar! Sadder still that a preconceived notion should have power to rob you for the greater part of your life of a supremely valuable element in your education. A written book, a painted picture—these are complete entities, but until a score has been transmuted into sound it is only half existent. Nothing teaches like listening to your work again and again as one of the audience—and here I put my finger on the only bitter spot in these reflections. But . . . Kismet!

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This Spring an event will take place which I never expected to see in my lifetime. I had almost forgotten the existence of my Mass, but when writing my Memoirs I hunted it up, and found, to my utter amazement, that I should never do anything better. I then wrote to Messrs. Novello about it, and their wholly justifiable reply: "We fear your Mass is practically dead" was the needed tonic. I at once asked the best friend I have in music, Sir Henry Wood, to look at it, and the result is that on February 7th, 1924, it is to be revived at Birmingham. If, after hearing it, anyone has the courage to maintain that had I been a man it could possibly have lain on the shelf for 31 years, even I, who am prepared for a good deal, shall be surprised. But perhaps the speaker will have his tongue in his cheek. It will never be "popular" in the sense of *Hiawatha* and *Gerontius*, which couple, I hear (as erstwhile *The Golden Legend*) run *Elijah* close for 2nd place—all three far behind *The Messiah* of course. But there are other works, among

them certain Masses and Passions that even the financial secretary of a Choral Society would not wish to see banished ! If in the fulness of time—say another 31 years—my Mass comes to occupy a humble place in that divine group I shall be satisfied.

Otherwise life has had this curious effect on me : that through the pleasure taken in my work by a few great friends, a few great artists (and one of the greatest I have known is an Englishwoman) or by entirely simple, unsophisticated people like the Old Vic audience, gives me unspeakable joy, at the bottom of my heart I am as detached from praise as from the contempt implied by the label. This because I had to go on without the former and in spite of the latter. As a hound that belongs to no pack will hunt a line for love of hunting, so my life has been a solitary pursuit of the vision that lured me away from home when I was a girl—the elusive vision every artist pursues

Cherchant sa bouche amère ou douce en fuite dans le vent.

And the only true happiness is when we seem to be touching a fold of her flying garment.

Except in literature, where the battle has been won for us, all women-creators—and here again I think reverently of Mrs. Swynnerton—could tell of secret hours when the solitude seemed unbearable. What matter, if, reviewing your work, you know that the upholding belief of your life was no illusion, that these things are indeed “for ever England” ? The exact place of my music in the general scale of values will not become manifest till naught remains of the composer but sexless dots and lines on paper ; I do not know it myself ; nor need I. But if something of the detachment, the strange sense of freedom and serenity that came with a flash of insight such as I tried to describe, when the miserable backwater of a personal fate was swept into the main current of human experience ; if something of the immense savour of life that disappointment has never marred for more than a passing moment ; if even a modicum of all this gets into any artist’s work, that work was worth doing. And if, after my death, this spirit speaks out of my music to others, what higher wages can one ask ?

* * * * *

There comes a moment when silence on certain very important subjects become cowardice ; to keep your self-respect you must speak, regardless of consequences. That is why I have spoken to-day—not, as I said before, in my own interest. From the personal point of view there is nothing to be gained ; perhaps even friends to be lost, for people accustomed to speak with authority may resent being told ever so gently that they have never really seen the thing they are talking about. That is why I call this article *A Burning of Boats*. I might also have called it *Leading a Horse to the Water*, for not only may the animal refuse to drink but he will possibly stamp on your toes.

These however are secondary considerations. And after all, whether or on the conflagration illumine the path for others, burning your boats is not bad fun. Especially if you are not meditating retreat !

P.S.—Since going to Press my attention has been drawn to the following remarks on my Mass in the 2nd Edit. (1908) of Grove's *Dictionary*, signed by Fuller Maitland. Either I never saw, or had forgotten this passage, but a more complete vindication of every word I have said above could not be found.

“This work definitely placed the composer amongst *the most eminent composers of her time*, and easily at the head of all those of her own sex Throughout it was virile, masterly in construction and workmanship, and particularly remarkable for the excellence and rich colour of the orchestration. *Miss Smyth did not, however, come into her own until she was recognised as an operatic writer.*”

As to having “come into her own”—even to-day, 15 years after the above words were written—the fact that this work has had to wait 31 years for a second performance is of such eloquence that we can leave it at that.

MR. ARNOLD BENNETT

By J. B. PRIESTLEY

THERE are more than fifty volumes now in the "List of Works to date," that faces the title page of every book by Mr. Bennett, and at the very sight of this monstrous bibliography, a kind of despair falls upon the critic who would try to estimate such an author. Nor is there any way out of it; the list must be faced resolutely, manfully, or the criticism will suffer. It will not do to treat Mr. Bennett as the author of only three books instead of fifty-three; we cannot write at length about *The Old Wives Tale*, *Clayhanger* and, let us say, *Riceyman Steps*, and then condemn all our author's other works, his fantasias, short stories, plays, pocket philosophies and books of travel and chit-chat, to the pulping machines with one wave of the hand. Many of these works may cut a better figure in their author's ledger accounts than they ever will in the literary histories of our time, but they are there and cannot be rightly ignored, for the real Mr. Bennett is not the writer of this or that book but is to be found somewhere behind all these books, perhaps buried beneath them but buried alive. Moreover, it is dangerous to dismiss whole rows of these less important volumes, because Mr. Bennett, being amazingly unequal, can suddenly fall to writing well in unexpected places just as he can fall to writing badly. As examples of the craft of writing, the actual business of setting down a number of facts and impressions in words, as distinct from the wider art of creation in literature, he has probably given us nothing better than the first few sketches in *Paris Nights*, which was called a "bold, brilliant, exciting book" when it first came out but has not, I imagine, attracted much attention recently; so that, to take only this one example, Mr. Bennett cannot be fairly judged without his *Paris Nights*. It is clear that to be seen distinctly he must be seen against the background of his complete works, good, bad and indifferent; many people only know the author of *The Human Machine* or *How To Make The Best of Life*, some others only know the author of *The Old Wives Tale* or *Clayhanger*, but both authors must be the subjects of any critical estimate of Mr. Arnold Bennett. The only danger there is in such a thorough examination, when space is limited, is that the mere bulk of work prevents close detailed criticism, with its eye on the individual book, its insistence upon chapter and verse, and inevitably encourages that loose easy generalising mode of criticism of which Mr. Bennett so far has had, perhaps, more than his fair share. This danger, however, is the least of many, and if Mr. Bennett has to suffer yet a few more easy generalisations, he must remember that he himself has been generalising no less easily and loosely throughout some half a hundred volumes.

These volumes are the work of a trinity of authors. The first, the most prolific and easily the best known, is the omniscient Mr. Bennett, the connoisseur, the tipster of life and the arts, the man who can put you wise, who can tell you a thing or two, who has made a stir in the big city and is now "in the swim," "in the movement" (his favourite phrases—see works *passim*), a terrible fellow who knows more about life than even the head waiter of the Grand Babylon Hotel. He has been everywhere and knows everything; he is curious and knowledgeable about cities, books, railway trains, soup, water-colours, frocks and skirts, and the Parisian Theatre; he is a lover of experts and probably wishes to become the expert of experts. In all this intense curiosity about every side of the life of his own time there is a zest, gusto, infectious enthusiasm, that is entirely admirable. At a time when so many clever persons are trying, in one way or another, to escape from life, to pretend that the real world is not there, we have here a very clever man who cannot have too much of it, a realist who discovers as much delight in a fact as some of his fellow authors do in an idea, and has the power to communicate something of that delight. Whatever else he may be, this Mr. Bennett is certainly a great journalist. Yet the result of this intense curiosity, this unflagging zest for things, is an attitude that is knowing rather than wise. There are too many limitations. Whole sides of life and states of mind, and these by no means the least important, some of them perhaps the most important, seem to mean nothing to him; he knows his world like the great journalist he is, but it is still the journalist's world, the world of the evening papers and not that of the poets, the saints and mystics, the great philosophers and historians; the voice is always that of an oracle, brimmed with certainties, but it is too often the oracle of the smoke-room. The section of his work which, with something like blasphemy, he cheerfully labels "Belles-Lettres" is nothing less than an epic of the cocksure. In his so-called Pocket Philosophies, or at least in some of them, he combines the vulgarity of the early Utilitarians (whose detachment perhaps modified it) with the equal vulgarity of a typical smart young materialist of the Eighties, whose dying whispers can be caught in Mr. Bennett's favourite metaphors, his talk about the Human Machine and so forth. Many sensitive readers, after learning from our author how to make the best of life, must have come to the conclusion that life was not worth making the best of, so sadly had it been vulgarised. So, too, his criticism, though there are delightful elements in it, is too often merely the cheerful impudence of a clever man who is not making a critical effort and is too interested either in attacking or following literary fashions to be capable of such an effort. It is this Mr. Bennett who is responsible for the miscellaneous books, who contributes a paragraph on every other page in the lighter novels, does his share of the dialogue in the plays, and even finds his way into the more serious novels. Unfortunately for him and fortunately for us, however, his work, except that in the pocket philosophies, is usually

brought to nothing because there is someone at hand to give the game away, to reveal the fact that the writer is not really a bored encyclopædic guide to the life of wealth and taste but is really a dazed enthusiast, a kind of wondering poet from the provinces, staggered at the way he is "getting on." You have only to open the first book to hand of Mr. Bennett's to see how frankly the game is given away: "Then it suddenly occurred to me that if I had gambled with louis instead of five-franc pieces I should have made 200 francs—200 francs in rather over an hour! Oh, luxury! Oh, being-in-the-swim! Oh, smartness! Oh, gilded and delicious sin!" That is not the first Mr. Bennett at all; it is the second, chanting his happy litany.

This second Mr. Bennett is simpler, more naive and enthusiastic, and altogether more engaging than the first; and he is nearer by a thousand leagues to the soul of literature, for he has one quality that is an essential ingredient of great romance—a sense of wonder. True, it is very limited; not only is the past closed to it, that living past which has been woven into the fabric of tradition and has secured for our delight the fragrance, colour and bloom of centuries, but much else that does not glitter on the surface of things is hidden from it too; and yet even this limitation is our gain, for it means that our author is lost in wonder at things that most other authors have ceased to wonder at, so that in his own fashion he has created a new kind of poetry. He is Wonder in a billy-cock, Romance with an excursion ticket to London, as mazed and dizzy at the sight of Harrods or the Savoy Hotel as Mr. de la Mare is with his dream of Arabia or Mr. Turner with his vision of the Andes; he comes to a metropolitan hotel as Childe Harold came to the Dark Tower. The advantages of being a provincial, one who has long been acquainted with the solid realities of life as they are to be discovered in small industrial towns, where the solid realities are most starkly displayed, and who is now zestful and ripe for the magnificent frivolities, the splendid mummeries, of London, these advantages were never better illustrated. In novel after novel, particularly those of the lighter kind, it is this Mr. Bennett, with his fresh vision, his humour and high spirits, who carries off the situation; he has only to take us all into a big hotel or restaurant or the Turkish Baths, and the trick is done and we are all excited, interested or amused again, all stepping out of King's Cross or St. Pancras still grasping the return half of our tickets, trying to look like persons who know what is what and are not to be trifled with, great city or no great city, but inwardly out-gasping and gaping stout Cortez himself. He does it time after time; Denry's whole existence, as we know him in *The Card* and *The Regent*, is one long excited climb; Priam Farll and his lady go trotting about the town and we are thrilled anew with them; Mr. Prohack quits his office to be one of the idle rich and has some wonderful sensations in the West End; and so on and so forth; the situation never palls on the writer and we catch something of his zest. He is the rhapsodist of gigantic hotels and

restaurants, White Cities, fashionable theatres and clubs, Turkish Baths, two thousand pound motor cars, pianolas, exclusive tailors, labour-saving devices, everything that is modern, expensive, luxurious, and not to be found in the Five Towns, or at least, in the Five Towns when Mr. Bennett lived there. Practically all his lighter stories, most of which he certainly enjoyed writing, are stories of wealth and luxury; they are crowded with millionaires who live in suites at colossal hotels, and are, in reality, a kind of fairy story that Mr. Bennett, seeking relaxation after the austerities of naturalistic fiction, is telling to himself, an old dream that comes back to his mind every time he sits down to write an easy idle tale. There is a fairy tale somewhere in every creative artist, and Mr. Bennett's is an up-to-date medley of millionaires whose hotel bills are twenty-five to fifty pounds a day, magnificently expensive and charming women of the world, experts, from medical to sartorial, ready at any moment to dance attendance and charge astounding fees, a full chorus of chefs, waiters, chauffeurs and flunkies; and in the midst of it all some half-sophisticated, half-simple soul, busy fulfilling old dreams and pinching himself to discover if he is yet awake; while in the background, the symbol of the luxurious life, the heaven of all climbers and Cards and Human Machines and men who live on twenty-four hours a day, there looms and blazes against the night sky—the Grand Babylon Hotel. If Mr. Bennett should ever become a legend and his work come to be regarded as a number of folk tales (and stranger things have happened), about one-third of his works will be grouped together as the Grand Babylon Hotel Cycle and attempts will no doubt be made to determine its religious significance. Meanwhile, the significance for us of these comedies of high life and high jinks that are played, without regard to expense, on carpets five inches thick, lies in the fact that in them the dreams and aspirations, the romantic possibilities of what had hitherto appeared to be the least promising class in the kingdom, the middle-aged members of the middle-class, have been seized upon and pressed into service as they have never have before, for the possible instruction of a few sociologists and the delight of all good novel readers. Finally, the secret of these romantic comedies of middle-age by a middle-aged novelist, the secret of their somewhat naive charm, is that at heart they are simply boyish; this second Mr. Bennett is nothing more (nor less) than a brilliant and delightful youth, not quite out of his teens, who has outgrown his tin soldiers and treasure islands only to make the Grand Babylon Hotel, golden, shining, the centre of his dreams and summit of his aspirations.

But even though another ten stories should be added to it, the Grand Babylon Hotel cannot entirely blot out the night sky and the strange stars, and not all the hosts of porters and page boys can prevent Change and Death from forcing their way into its velvet, gilded lounge; in short, there is a great deal more in life, and in the art that would pretend to grapple with life, than was ever dreamed of in the philosophy

of the second Mr. Bennett. But there is yet another Mr. Bennett, the third and last, who has made the largest contribution to the major works but who is yet less distinct than the others and can hardly be described, without grave injustice, in a few lines. He does not glide over the surface of things as the other two do ; he has not their almost metallic optimism ; indeed, all his brave epicurean gestures cannot prevent us from noticing that he is at heart troubled and somewhat pitiful, sceptical, but, despite his fine show of indifference, not coolly sceptical, but disturbed, leaning ever towards pessimism. He it is who has written so many passages like the following, which comes from that little encounter between Carlotta and old Lord Alcar in *Sacred and Profane Love* :

“ Only the fool and the very young expect happiness. The wise merely hope to be interested, at least not to be bored, in their passage through the world. Nothing is so interesting as love and grief and the one involves the other. Ah ! would I not do the same again ! ”

He spoke gravely, wistfully, and vehemently, as if employing the last spark of divine fire that was left in his decrepit frame. This undaunted confession of a faith which had survived twenty years of inactive meditation, this banner waved by an expiring arm in the face of the eternity that mocks at the transience of human things, filled me with admiration

He it was—to go from an early book to one of the most recent—who wrote the title (but nothing else) of the last volume of philosophy for the million that the first, the omniscient, Mr. Bennett gave us ; the title is *How to Make the Best of Life*, which has a strange ring, suggesting that the writer, so apparently cheerful, so cocksure, believes in his heart of hearts that life is a bad business—but (and we can see him yawning and shrugging) he can give the young readers a few tips that might ease their gradual descent into the grave. He it was, too, who devised that fine melancholy thing, *The Old Wives' Tale*, which has two suffering heroines, Constance and Sophia Baines, and three conquering heroes, Time, Mutability and Death. The shadows of these three are over *Clayhanger* too, and here again we cannot fail to notice how, in selecting and arranging his material, he has chosen to emphasize the passing of the old, the coming of the new, change and decay. Here, we feel life, which may be something more than sound and fury, may be coloured with passion, shot through with beauty, brought into harmony for an hour or so by love, is still a tale told by an idiot, the silliest, saddest old wife. Many critics have seen in this Mr. Bennett a sociologist, mainly because sociology in the guise of fiction has been fashionable and Mr. Bennett happens to have worked closely over large canvasses and has been inspired more by the character of a whole region than by a few individuals ; but actually, though he has sometimes taken over a few sociological tricks from his friend, Mr. Wells, he is no sociologist. Like Mr. Wells, he is fond of emphasising the fact that times change, and passages like this are common :

John Baines had belonged to the past, to the age when men really did think of their souls, when orators by phrases could move crowds to fury or to pity,

when no one had learnt to hurry, when Demos was only turning in his sleep, when the sole beauty of life resided in its inflexible and slow dignity, when hell really had no bottom and a gilt-clasped Bible really was the secret of England's greatness. Mid-Victorian England lay sleeping on that mahogany bed. Ideals had passed away with John Baines. It is thus that ideals die; not in the conventional pageantry of honoured death, but sorrily, ignobly, while one's head is turned

and he will often show a whole countryside moving from one era to another, but unlike Mr. Wells (with his laboratory and lecture-room manner), he does not describe growth and development, movement towards a certain end, so much as simply change itself, the social kaleidoscope. As for his pessimism, his vaguely uneasy scepticism, that is always liable to show itself when the easy mental attitudes of the omniscient and the wondering Mr. Bennett can no longer be maintained, it is rather felt everywhere, like an atmosphere, than definitely encountered; but it is certainly there, and it is this that makes so many persons, men and women, who do not ask for barley-sugar from literature, who can relish their Hardy, Meredith, Conrad, indifferent or even antagonistic to Mr. Bennett's finest work; and even the rest of us must have caught ourselves and our friends more often heartily praising such work than returning to it for another reading. Mr. Bennett's literary methods, as distinct from his attitude of mind, have, of course, their influence here, and they will be noticed below; but it is worth remarking that this third Mr. Bennetts, like the two others though in a less degree, has still some unfortunate limitations; we feel a want of values, and notice a certain insensitiveness to the finer shades of feeling, the more subtle traits of character, the more poetical and mystical states of mind. He deliberately makes all his figures smaller than himself so that he can see round them rather than enter into them. He is something more than an ironical spectator; he is frequently moved both by a generous enthusiasm and by pity, and he can often strike out a gushing spring of romance and beauty from what would appear barren rock. There is, for example, one chapter in *Clayhanger*, a chapter that may possibly make a stronger appeal to North country readers than to others, which describes how the young Clayhanger, in search of a customer of his father's, attends a Free-and-Easy at the local tavern and there discovers the art of clog-dancing as understood by Florence Simcox :

Her style was not that of a male clog-dancer, but it was indubitably clog-dancing, full of marvels to the connoisseur, and to the profane naught but a highly complicated series of wooden noises. Florence's face began to perspire. Then the concertina ceased playing—so that an undistracted attention might be given to the supremely difficult final figure of the dance.

And thus was rendered back to the people in the charming form of beauty that which the instincts of the artist had taken from the sordid ugliness of the people. The clog, the very emblem of the servitude and the squalor of brutalised populations, was changed, on the light feet of this favourite, into the medium of grace. Few of these men but at some time of their lives had worn the clog,

had clattered in it through winter's slush, and through the freezing darkness before dawn, to the manufactory and the mill and the mine, whence after a day of labour under discipline more than military, they had clattered back to their little candle-lighted homes. One of the slatterns behind the door actually stood in clogs to watch the dancer. The clog meant everything that was harsh, foul and desolating; it summoned images of misery and disgust. Yet on those feet that had never worn it seriously, it became the magic instrument of pleasure, waking dulled wits and forgotten aspirations, putting upon everybody an enchantment

But if we turn back to the fifty-odd volumes, the Bennett canon, we may choose to see them not as the work of three different authors but as the work of one author who has been played upon by three different sets of influences corresponding to the three divisions into which his life, during its most formative period, very easily falls. There is, first, his childhood, education and early manhood in the Five Towns. From 1867 to the beginning of the 'Nineties, young E. A. Bennett, brisk as a bee, was unconsciously hiving facts and impressions, scenes and characters for the day when Arnold Bennett, already a smart journalist with a story or two to his credit, should seek a new element for his fiction and suddenly pluck out these fat golden honeycombs. Mr. Bennett created the Five Towns but only after they had created him. It must not be thought, though, that he owes his success to the interest and appeal of his chosen "locality"—as some smaller writers do—for the result would have been just the same had he been born and bred in Lancashire or the West Riding, on the Tyne or the Clyde. He was made by the Five Towns only because they stuffed his head with material to which he had only (it is a big "only") to apply his later dexterity and craft to transform into magnificent fiction; and this material was so plentiful, his early memories crowded so thick and fast upon him, that his work, willy-nilly, took on that fullness and richness which is one of the glories of English fiction. There was a time when Mr. Bennett, under French influences, was probably all in favour of thin, rigid, brittle narratives, of the kind that are quite wrongly regarded as masterpieces of technique, and so was all against such fullness and richness, such lively and crowded canvasses, but fortunately there was a divinity that shaped his ends and that divinity was the Five Towns, "smouldering and glittering" in his memory. His real mastery and his real popularity began with the Five Towns stories, and, with the exception of his latest novel, *Riceyman Steps*, all his best work is linked up with his birthplace. It must not be forgotten, too, that his early popularity was due in part to the fact that he had what we might call a "locality" reference that helped the ordinary reader to remember his name and work; he was the Arnold Bennett who wrote amusing stories about the Five Towns. At first, in his volumes of short tales, like the *Grim Smile of the Five Towns*, and such things as *Helen with the High Hand*, he had a tendency to act the showman instead of the plain chronicler; in the middle of a story he would beat a big drum and invite the reader to walk

up, walk up, to see the strange characteristics of the Five Towns. This trick, however, in its most aggressive form, he soon dropped and there is little of it after 1908. He shares with his sturdy fellow-townsmen, whom he has described with such gusto, many leading traits, not the least of which is a robust sense of humour that, if it lacks subtlety, has at least few blind spots. Like them, too, he is always steadily aware of the grim realities, the unpleasant facts of existence; he knows the provincial and industrial tragi-comedy.

The second period is that of his early years in London, when he was engaged in journalism and ingenious pot-boiling of various kinds. He became a very successful journalist, and has remained one ever since; most of his lighter novels, whatever else they may be, are certainly good journalism, and so too are many of his plays; their style and manner are often those of the short articles on the leader page of a newspaper, and their topics are frequently the topics of the moment, though not so ephemeral in interest that the novels cannot be read or the plays performed after the lapse of a few years. Such a novel as *Mr. Prohack*, for example, has only a slight story, but is such excellent journalism that it could have been split into fragments, with only a few changes, and published in this periodical and that magazine as sketches of the times. During this period he edited a popular paper for women, and it is often claimed that this experience, obviously a very valuable one, initiated him into all the secrets of feminine psychology; he was admitted behind the scenes and has stayed there ever since. Certainly no modern novelist (if we may believe women themselves) can touch in the details of a woman's life so lightly and surely; but a good deal more than a few years' acquaintance with popular journalism for women is needed to make a man the father of great daughters in literature, and if there is an advantage in knowing some feminine characteristics, as it were, off by heart, such easy knowledge is also not without danger to a creative artist, as we shall presently see. What such popular journalism did do was to give him a thorough understanding and appreciation of the topics, the situations, incidents and characters that have the firmest hold upon the popular imagination; and this understanding enabled him to lead the monster gently by the nose, and taught him not to fly in its face. His journalism gave him ideas, not purely literary ideas, but ideas of every description, and no novelist of our time has had more; with him, as the late Dixon Scott once pointed out, there is no deception; he not only tells us exactly what his characters can do, but he actually shows us how they do it; when he introduces into a novel a new kind of house or an ideal theatre he gives us an exact description of the labour-saving devices in the house and the interior arrangements of the theatre; when he tells us how Denry made a fortune and a reputation as a wit and joker, a Card, we see exactly how it was done, we are given the schemes, the wit and jokes, until we realise that the writer himself is a Card too, and that we might all set up as Cards if we studied the life of Denry with sufficient care. Further, it

taught him that the great sin in writing is to be dull, and since then he has been many things, exasperating, irritating, intolerable, but never dull; even when he was working under the influence of the bleakest naturalistic theory of the art of fiction, he was never dull, but always bright, alert, efficient, if nothing else. But while he learned to see the dramatic situation, and the equally dramatic "problem" in his miscellaneous writing, and to make his style snappy and perky and button-holing, in all but his very best pieces of work we see the trail of the newspaper and the bright weekly all over his situations and his style, and in the latter we too often hear the click and rattle of efficient mechanism that is functioning freely (the metaphor and the several words that compose it are all favourites of Mr. Bennett's) rather than the music of an instrument, finely tuned and delicately handled. Even in his best things he never achieves a really fine style. He has written a good deal about prose style, but it is very doubtful if he realises what is involved in a great prose style. He, in common with many other writers on the subject, appears to think that style is simply the accurate expression of the writer's matter or thought. But style, in the purely literary sense of the term, has a three-fold function: it expresses the thought by a logical arrangement of symbols; it contrives to intensify emotion by its undertones and overtones, suggestion and association of all kinds; and further it gives pleasure of itself merely as an arrangement, a pattern, a decoration. Most of us think ourselves fortunate if we succeed in making our style fulfil the first part of its function, and Mr. Bennett, like Mr. Wells, but unlike Mr. Hardy or Mr. Conrad, is no more successful. He sometimes comes near to a personal style by making use of certain tricks, the chief of which is a succession of short exclamatory sentences that begin with a panting conjunction and end with a gasping mark of exclamation; but such tricks are far from being pleasant. Indeed, had there not been another set of influences at work, Mr. Bennett might have declined altogether into a writer of bright melodramas and amusing clap-trap articles. "When one looks back," he has written, "one sees that certain threads run through one's life, making a sort of pattern in it. These threads and the nature of the pattern are not perceived until long after the events constituting them. I now see that there has been a French thread through my life." This last set of influences, in short, is the result of his early interest in French, chiefly modern French, literature (at a time when his acquaintance with our own literature was only slight), and of an equal interest in French life that finally led to his living in France for nearly ten years.

It is obvious that an impressionable man of letters cannot prefer a foreign literature (and one entirely alien in its outlook and manner) and suffer a voluntary exile for so long without some considerable change taking place in his point of view and his methods of work. Only a long and close study, based on something more than an outside knowledge of Mr. Bennett's work, could assess the value of such influences,

but we may reasonably permit ourselves a few guesses. In the first place, France developed and sustained his literary conscience; Mr. Bennett may have boiled the pot but he has at least boiled it properly and not taken money for leaving it luke-warm; never at his worst has he fallen into the disgraceful slovenliness that spoils so much of Mr. Wells's later work; and at his best, though he may not reach the last subtleties of construction or the ultimate felicities of style, he has shown a fine conscientious craftsmanship and has done all that a man can consciously do to bring his work near to perfection. Further, contact with French life and thought has, I imagine, sharpened his sense of the dramatic and given to his handling of any dramatic situation a certain lightness and crispness. He is not by nature a dramatist at all because his finest work demands that background to the action which only a novelist can touch in; and the people of his plays are not so solid as the persons in his novels mainly because he sees them as a novelist sees them; but nevertheless he has contrived to write a number of successful and entertaining plays simply because he has good ideas, original but not too original (think of *Milestones*, *What the Public Wants* and *The Title*), and because he has, too, this light but sure dramatic touch. So far, this literary apostasy has brought nothing but gain; but actually there have been serious losses. Mr. Bennett, who, unlike many novelists, has always been something of a literary theorist, began writing novels at a time when he was a fervent admirer of Mr. George Moore, Maupassant and the French naturalistic school. He was a great advocate of "technique," which really meant nothing more than a suppression of the narrator and a deliberate simplicity in the narrative, the action, the background. Later, in *The Author's Craft*, which is easily the best of the short talks and is really a very sensible and lucid discussion of some very difficult subjects, he admitted that his earlier attitude towards the novel was mistaken:

With the single exception of Turgenev, the great novelists of the world, according to my own standards, have either ignored technique or have failed to understand it. What an error to suppose that the finest foreign novels show a better sense of form than the finest English novels!

What an error, indeed. The fact is, of course, that the art of fiction as practised by the great novelists *is* technique, and any other "technique" is either some inferior method or a mere catch-phrase of the pontifical critic. But Mr. Bennett began with such admirations, and in following the wrong masters did violence to his own genius. He himself is essentially a Romantic with certain ironical, sceptical twists in his mind; and his early ideas of what a serious novel should be seem to me to have been definitely harmful because they have made him divide his work in a fashion that has hindered his development as a great novelist. To put it shortly, the second Mr. Bennett has never settled down to work in harmony with the third Mr. Bennett; we have had all the rich comedy, the fantastic romance of the commonplace, the high spirits on one side, and the writer's magnificent sense of a social background, his wide sweep,

his feeling for obscure and only half-articulate tragedy, his grave pity, on the other side ; *The Card* is a fine tale and *Clayhanger* is a finer, but we might have had, and might still have, a story that was both the Card and Clayhanger and therefore something more, which would have been unquestionably one of the greatest works of our time. The naturalistic and realistic elements in his work have always been sadly over-emphasized by critics. He is essentially one of our English Romantics, whose feeling for romance is so strong that he can find it where most persons would never even dream of looking for it ; indeed, this may be said to be his great contribution to the English Novel. Practically all his more serious novels are simply romantic obstacle races, almost romantic conjuring tricks ; for he carefully puts away all the usual trappings, shows us the most commonplace people in the dingiest and dreariest setting, takes off his coat and rolls up his sleeves, and proceeds to evolve romance. One of his first serious novels, *Leonora*, shows us that it is possible for a woman verging on middle-age, the mother of grown-up daughters, suddenly to become the victim of a consuming romantic passion. Mr. Bennett himself, I imagine, must be surprised when he learns that he is regarded, as he so often is regarded, as one of the enemies of romance, only anxious to destroy the illusion by holding out for his readers' inspection the wigs and grease-paint and pasteboard castles of this life, a writer who stands chuckling with Time himself over the crumbling ruin of so many little lives. It is true, as we have seen, that he is aware, and by no means blithely aware, of the ironies of existence in such a world, and that behind his superficial convictions, his downright opinions on art and Bollinger 1911 and barbers, there lurks a mournful scepticism, but actually this only makes him more passionately attached to the romance, the dumb poetry, the hidden agonies and exultations of commonplace persons. He has made full use of the simple fact that however dull and prosaic a man may appear to others, however tedious his life may seem, to himself his life is always exciting, amazing, and he himself a daily miracle ; and in three out of every four of Mr. Bennett's stories, it will be found that the most piquant effects have been obtained simply by a continual contrast of what he might call the "the outside" and the "inside" views of a person's motives, actions, character. If, as I imagine, his readers so often mistake his intentions, no doubt the fault is largely his and is the result of some flaw in his art ; but it is easy to see what has happened, for while the reader (of the more important novels) has naturally seen the story progressing in a forward direction, as it travels from the first chapter to the last, Mr. Bennett himself has seen the story backward, as it were, has first conceived the final situation and then worked out the rest of the tale in the light of that. The difference is important. Thus, in *The Old Wives' Tale* the reader sees the history of one of Time's innumerable conquests, the decline and fall of feminine grace and beauty, the eternal cruel process by which two exquisite girls, things of wonder, are slowly transformed into two helpless old women ; but the author, while he sees all this too, really

begins with a vision of two lonely old women, harmless creatures in a provincial town who would excite no comment beyond perhaps a pitying remark, and then realises that behind them, even them, there is an epic, the play of gigantic instincts, a series of strange tragi-comedies that have been secretly enacted in commonplace shops, houses and hotels. We see the two old women and "nothing more"; but he sees the whole story, typical and yet marvellous, and that is his triumph. That he conceived the story in *The Old Wives' Tale* backwards is made plain in his preface to the later edition, and there can be little doubt that the same thing happened with the later tales. In the Clayhanger trilogy, he probably began with a mental picture of a seemingly commonplace married couple, middle-aged, middle-class, prosperous, contented, apparently prosaic. But behind them he saw, reeling back into the middle years of last century, the histories of Edwin Clayhanger and Hilda Lessways, and he knew that the middle-aged ease of *These Twain* was nothing less than a port in some Fortunate Isles that the pair had only reached after incredible adventures on the high seas of youthful life. Again, he probably saw that magnificent novel, *Riceyman Steps*, from the angle of those contents-bills noted in the last chapter, "Mysterious Death of a Miser in Clerkenwell," "Midnight Tragedy in King's Cross Road" and the rest, and actually we ought to have such newspaper summaries of the story somewhere at the back of our minds when we are reading it, so that we are conscious of the piquant, or, rather, in this instance, moving contrast already noticed, the contrast here between "a sordid affair in Clerkenwell," involving one of the seediest parts of London, two misers, a simple charwoman who steals scraps of bacon, and her semi-idiotic lover, the contrast between this and the actual story as we come to know it from within, a story that has in it humanity and the world, love and death, strange loyalties and fantastic bravery, and that odd nobility and even beauty which a ruling passion, no matter how ignoble it may appear, takes on once it has secured a man's complete devotion. *Riceyman Steps* (which was reviewed at length in these pages two months ago), though it lacks the epic fullness of the two great Five Towns stories and is more limited in its scope, is undoubtedly Mr. Bennett's greatest achievement as a pure craftsman, and is perhaps the best example of his disguised romantic method, of the romance that fights its way through reality when all the gates of easy appeal have been barred.

But in none of these works has the complete Mr. Bennett appeared; something that crackles and blazes so delightfully in the lighter novels has been rigidly excluded from them, and for this exclusion, this deliberate limitation, we may perhaps thank those early views of the novel, largely formed under French influence, that have already been noticed. That influence, too, is partly responsible for a certain characteristic that is at once a virtue and a great fault in Mr. Bennett as a novelist. This is a generalising tendency which can be seen in everything he touches but which is most easily observed in his treatment of love. He is, above all

our other novelists, the novelist of middle-aged love; time after time, he has, for example, shown us with much humour, dramatic effect, and truth, the way in which apparently bored, condescending or amused husbands, who pride themselves on a lack of sentiment, conceal in their bosoms an immense admiration, genuine passion and solid respect for their wives; no living novelist is better able to handle the general realities of sexual relations. But—and here he seems to me very French—the relations always remain too general; it is always, or nearly always (for Hilda Lessways and Clayhanger perhaps provide an exception) a man and The Sex; we are not shown the peculiar, the unique relation between two individuals, a certain man and a certain woman, but we are simply shown “an affair” in progress; the situation is touched off very cleverly, but it is merely typical, an approximation, excellent indeed for brisk articles on married life or light comedies but beneath the level, the highly individualised level, of great fiction; everywhere the emphasis is laid on what might be called the constant factors in sexual life, love and marriage as they appear to a psychologist and not as they should appear to an artist; his men may be finely individualised but they are not individualised in their sexual relations, and as for his women, they are too often simply *La Femme*, and no sooner do they make their appearance than we hear, coming faintly down the wind, the vast and endless generalisations of the Boulevards. This is not the least but it is the last of the many limitations that must be noticed, however ungrateful it may seem, in any account of one of the most prolific, entertaining and (within certain limits) conscientious writers of our time. When Denry the Card was chosen as Mayor, one of his rivals, with the solemnity of a literary critic, asked what Denry had done, “what cause was he identified with,” and this devil’s advocate was crushed by the reply that Denry was identified “with the great cause of cheering us all up.” Mr. Bennett, in his lighter work, in which he has sketched so inimitably the urban comedy of the twentieth century, is identified with the same great cause and is, indeed, a Denry of letters. In his more ambitious novels, he has done something more worth while than even playing the Card, for he has taken ugly places in ugly epochs and by dint of rare understanding and noble labour has transformed their chronicles into art; has set a whole host of seemingly commonplace persons, the people of well nigh a whole countryside, marching down the years in that great procession which is headed by Hamlet and Falstaff, Uncle Toby and Cleopatra, Becky Sharp and Squire Western, Mr. Pickwick and the Wife of Bath.

MUSIC - DRAMA

An Art-Form in four Dimensions

By GERALDINE P. DILLA

WHY has the opera or music-drama been the subject of more controversies than any other form of music? From its origin in a revolt against musical conditions of the late sixteenth century to the present time—through the disputes of the Gluckists and the Piccinists in the eighteenth century, of the Wagnerians and the anti-Wagnerians of the nineteenth century—its history has been marked by dissensions and conflicting theories. Why have many of the greatest musicians never composed operas, such as Bach, Brahms, Mendelssohn; and why have so many great composers written only one opera, such as Beethoven and Schumann, then turned aside to go higher as composers of greater art?

Since the opera is really a union of drama with music, why have none of the greatest poets written librettos for operas, or why are practically all librettos very poor dramatic literature? Why have the great painters and designers nearly always left the scenery of opera to beginners or second-rate talents? Why is perfect histrionic art never seen on the opera stage but often seen in the drama without music?

Is it not strange that so many attacks, generally unanswered, have been made on opera as an art-form? Addison in early numbers of the *Spectator* satirized the English texts, the Italian actors, the use of a foreign language, and the nonsensical character of the drama. Voltaire said that what is too silly to be said is sung. Samuel Johnson denounced opera as an "exotic and irrational entertainment, which has always been combatted and always has prevailed." Lord Chesterfield wrote a remarkable indictment in a letter to the *World* in 1754. Count Leo Tolstoi in *What is Art?* bitterly ridiculed Wagnerian music-drama, and criticised not only the extravagance of it but the real defects of opera as an art-form. An enumeration, however, of the censures against opera will not add much light on the subject; it has been made often enough. Rather shall I first define the theory of this art-form, and then examine briefly but somewhat scientifically its main problems of form, content and realisation.

The only basis for any kind of opera or music-drama is the theory on which Richard Wagner founded his "art work of the future." After considering the doctrines of eminent German art critics (such as Lessing in his researches concerning the limits of painting and poetry), Wagner arrived at the conclusion that each branch of art when developed to the full extent of its capabilities could not overstep these limits without incurring the risk of appearing incomprehensible and fantastical. He thought that as soon as each art had reached its utmost limits it demanded to be joined to a sister art. He further insisted that the separate forms

of art had long reached maturity—though no one can prove this assertion and few would want to do so ; that there was no sculpture to set beside the Greek, no painting to set beside that of Florence and Venice, no poet had rivalled Shakespeare, no musician had rivalled Beethoven. What then, he argued, was left for the artist of the future but that he should fuse into one complex whole the elements that had already attained their individual perfection ? The elements were to be fused, not aggregated ; the whole was to be a simple organic unity in which no part was neglected, or accidental, or superfluous. The object was to present a true picture of human feeling with the utmost fullness and intensity, freed from every conventional expression by the happy union of all the arts, giving to each only what it is able to deal with—but thus dealing with everything.

Wagner thought he derived his basal principle from the success of the Greek tragedy, just as the first Florentine opera writers thought they were reviving Greek drama in their “*operæ per musica*.” But in reality this democratic coalition of music, poetry, acting, painting, architecture and sculpture was much different from the ancient practice, for all the conditions of Attic drama conspired to focus the attention of the audience on the poetry. A truly comprehensive study of Greek tragedy does not confirm any theory of the music-drama.

In a typical drama there are three elements : words, acting and scenery. This might be called a kind of three dimensional art, logical and consistent. Colour and lighting are accessories to the scenery ; a dance may make part of the acting ; the words may become poetry. But music comes into the drama as a sort of fourth or extra dimension. We can reason very well concerning the effect to be gained by a fourth art—music ; we can work theoretically at the problems of this union of the arts, much as Wagner did. Can we solve them accurately ? We seem to comprehend the poetry, acting and scenery in a drama all at one time. Are we sure we can react in a fourth way by hearing the music at the very same time ?

To reason mathematically, there are three equations or combinations of symbols to be solved before we can arrive at this union of arts—the opera. First we must consider the music and the scenery ; then the music and the acting ; then the music and the poetry. Even these are not all the problems ; for the opera music includes both vocal and instrumental, in both solos and concerted numbers ; the poetry involves both the thought or meaning as well as the various technical beauties of verse ; the acting may be realistic, conventional, or interpretative by actors or dancers ; the term scenery is made to include the whole stationary arrangement of painted canvases, screens and draperies, and the movable properties of the stage, in short, everything the audience sees—except itself.

What is the effect of combining music with scenery ? Music is always changing, it progresses ; it is a kinetic or active art that changes the state of mind and emotion of the audience. Scenery is a kind of passive

or static art whose influence on the spectator remains constant. It may harmonize with the emotional mood at the opening of the act, but it is very unlikely to do so at the end unless the setting is so simple that a change in colour or intensity of light can readjust the agreement. The obvious conclusion from these widely varying characteristics is that the scenery and the music cannot be in accord with each other except for a very short time, and the opera audience is confronted with the mixture of two dissimilar arts infusible to a harmonious expression. Moreover, music is essentially ideal and unconventionalized; while few stage-managers and scene-painters seem to make any but realistic or conventionally symbolic scenery.

If the setting is changed or if some parts of it move, like the coloured lights and floating gauze that make the waves wherein the Rhine daughters swim or Lohengrin's boat rides, it is most unlikely that the wave movement can be exactly synchronized with the music. But if the billows do wave in six-eight time in both scenery and music, either the latter is a caricature of true art, or the scenery is so triumphant a mechanical illusion that the spectator loses the artistic appeal because he is too busy admiring the skill of the stage-carpenter and the electrician. The scene is then no beautiful picture; it is only a distracting exhibit of mechanical dexterity. Thus in all cases the music and the scenery of the opera cannot be made to achieve a satisfactory artistic effect; and this first combination fails to help toward this strangely four dimensional art-form.

The second problem is the union of music with acting. A requirement of all music is that it have regular rhythm, which may vary slightly or change, but its regularity is fundamental for orchestra and vocalists. Acting in opera is the representation of human action, which is dictated by reason, impulse and caprice, all of which make it irregular. If there is any semblance of regularity in human action, it is never the same kind of rhythm that music has—the regular recurrence of stresses. Hence the realistic acting of drama cannot be joined to music in any opera; it conflicts with the music or loses its artistic truth. A symbolic or conventional representation of human action can be made to harmonize for short periods of time with music, as when a ballet, dance or march is introduced into an opera. Then, however, the poetry becomes very insignificant or disappears altogether, and the result is not a union of four arts but merely a union of rhythmic motion with music in front of a scene.

Another obstacle arises to prevent the artistic union of acting and music. The vocalists in opera are the actors, but the singing may be such as to interfere with and postpone the necessary gestures, or the action demanded by the libretto may be so vigorous as to interfere with the proper singing of the roles. These conditions are present in most operas; the second was especially well shown by Rimsky-Korsakov's *Le Coq d'Or*, a novelty produced several years ago at the Metropolitan.

This opera was no success abroad as first produced, merely because the action was so extravagantly strenuous that the music was spoiled thereby. The way in which it succeeded was by being split into two performances ; that is, each role was assigned to two characters. Dancers on the central stage interpreted the action, and singers sitting unobtrusively quiet at the ends of the stage interpreted the music. This astonishing and interesting work was given by Diaghilev's Russian Ballet, who acted in dumb show the story that the singers and the orchestra related in words and music. Critics differed in their appraisals of this strange *Golden Cockerel*, which, however, was not really an opera but a pantomime and a cantata performed at the same time. To such hybrids can a union of acting and music lead !

But the most difficult of the three main problems of opera is the union of music with words, the libretto, either in verse or prose. If it is good verse, it depends for its artistic effect upon clear, resonant, and measured enunciation to bring out the beauty of its word sounds, rhythm, rhyme, perhaps assonance, alliteration and quantity. But such enunciation is impossible in any except the simplest unaccompanied song with the easiest of melodies and the plainest of short words. Even though the operatic singer use the original and familiar language of the libretto and try to pronounce each vowel and consonant clearly, yet the audience can seldom hear the words distinctly while the orchestra is accompanying. The only way to catch all the words of an opera is to follow the soloist in the libretto, which proceeding is impossible in the insufficient light of the opera-house. Even if it were possible to read the words while hearing the music, the diligent libretto-reader would not be getting his opera, for he would have only two arts—poetry and music—while he lost the acting and scenery. If the spectator memorise his libretto beforehand so as to get the fullest enjoyment of his opera, he still has no union of four arts, but only the acting, music, and scenery after a previous acquaintance with the poetry. If the libretto is unadorned prose, the special beauties of verse are not there to be lost because of the music ; but the audience still needs to gain all the meaning of the words, and this is impossible in the distracting ensemble of the opera.

The speech of life and especially that of drama is a straightforward progression of ideas with so little repetition as to be negligible. But a requirement of all musical form is frequent repetition ; even the leit-motiv is necessary for unity and coherence when the older Italian forms are discarded. Again, in drama almost never do several characters speak at once, certainly never for more than an interjection or two. If they did, the audience would lose the words and have only a pantomime. But the requirement of variety in a long musical composition like the opera, demands some concerted numbers, some rather long passages where several actors sing together. If they sing the same words, the drama is untrue, hence inartistic ; if they sing different words, the audience cannot possibly understand two sets of words at one time, hence one of these

four arts is destroyed by the others. Various expedients have been tried from the days of Gluck, Mozart, and Wagner to to-day, but no one has succeeded in solving the problem of uniting beautiful and true music with beautiful and true dramatic poetry throughout an entire opera, for this third great and fundamental equation in the union of the four arts is insolvable.

Aside from and in addition to such considerations of form and presentation of these four arts together, there is still the problem of the content or real meaning of these arts. A harmonious union requires that all arts express the same ideas or feelings at the same time. In spite of all that bewildered critics with limited vocabularies may say when rhapsodizing in transferred epithets, and trying to explain obscure works to amateurs, an art finds its reason for existence in the fact that it expresses what cannot be expressed in any other way. By no two arts is the same idea or feeling uttered. Even somewhat similar or harmoniously related emotions expressed in several different arts would not constitute union of these arts, for in reality the result would be merely several thoughts or feelings expressed simultaneously.

Walter Pater in the *School of Giorgione* wrote: "It is a mistake of much popular criticism to regard poetry, music and painting—all the various products of art—as but translations into different languages of one and the same fixed quantity of imaginative thought, supplemented by certain technical qualities of colour in painting, of sound in music, of rhythmical words in poetry. In this way the sensuous element in art, and with it almost everything in art that is essentially artistic, is made a matter of indifference; and a clear apprehension of the opposite principle—that the sensuous material of each art brings with it a special phase of beauty, untranslatable into the forms of any other, an order of impressions distinct in kind—is the beginning of all true æsthetic criticism." Music has as little association with the other arts in regard to its contents as its materials and methods. In its best and truest state music has no object of imitation; and for this as well as other reasons, it stands isolated from all other products of the human mind. How can music then be united to drama without the sacrifice of truth and beauty in one or the other art?

In fact this union of all the arts in the music-drama recalls a passage in *The Principles of Psychology* by Professor James, where he speaks of the perfect man who is nowhere to be found, because his realization would involve the co-existence of mutually exclusive virtues. He said: "Not that I would not, if I could, be both handsome and fat and well dressed, a great athlete, and make a million a year, and be a wit, a bon-vivant, a lady-killer as well as a philosopher, a philanthropist, statesman, warrior, an African explorer, as well as a tone-poet, and a saint. But the thing is simply impossible. The millionaire's work would run counter to the saint's; the bon-vivant and the philosopher would trip each other up; the philosopher and the lady-killer could not well keep house in the

same tenement of clay. Such different characters may, conceivably, at the outset of life be alike *possible* to a man. But so make any one *actual*, the rest must more or less be suppressed." Like this perfect man the opera or music-drama implies a union of incompatible elements.

To return to the analogy from science, let the scenic stage setting be the first dimension, as length ; then the acting is the second, breadth ; the poetry is the third, depth or height ; the music is the fourth, and what is the fourth ? Time perhaps. That continues the analogy very well, for music is a time art, and mathematicians sometimes make the hypothesis that time is the fourth dimension. But no mathematician can realise a combination of his four dimensions so as to create any definite impression in another's mind. He can present no real figure or visible or tangible instance of his four-dimensional creation, merely because human minds cannot conceive an actual combination of four dimensions. Can human minds comprehend a real union of four arts—an opera ?

Psychology proves that the mind can receive only one appeal at any time. An artistic effect is not doubled because it appeals to both eyes and ears simultaneously. At any given moment, a person may understand the words or sounds or sight, but not the words *and* sounds *and* sights. In a long work of the combined arts, a spectator drifts from one to another, or by rapid mental exertion he gives each art his attention in preferred moments. If he is that rare ideal opera-goer—a person equally intelligent and sensitive in his appreciation of all the arts, he first sees the scenery, then hears some music, sees some striking bit of action, catches a group of words, listens to the orchestra, and so on throughout the opera. If he is ignorant of the arts, he still finds plenty of movement or sound to be pleasantly fascinated without his mental effort. If he is really musical, he will see little of the action or setting, hear very few words, but rivet his attention on the voices and the orchestra.

Skilful dramatists and actors show their recognition of this limitation of the human mind. When there is likely to be a confusion or multiplicity of appeals in a plain drama, as when a striking scene is first disclosed or when the action is absorbingly intricate, the dialogue is made unimportant and negligible, often omitted altogether for several moments. Many curtains rise on empty stages so as to prevent any distraction of the attention when the important character enters. Only musicians still delude themselves with the hope of appealing to many senses at the same time ; they, like Wagner, still pursue that attractive and false chimera—the music-drama.

For no solution to this problem of the great art-form in four dimensions, poetry, acting, painting and music, can be found. The laws of structure and form in the four arts conflict ; the content of every art is different from that of every other ; the simultaneous presentations of these arts obstruct or cancel each other ; and lastly, the present state of the human mind is such that no person, however highly trained and responsive to all the arts, can grasp the expression of all these arts continuously even though they could be unified in a music-drama.

CORRESPONDENCE

AN EMENDATION IN *HELLAS*.*(To the Editor of THE LONDON MERCURY)*

SIR,—

Victorious Wrong, with vulture scream,
 Salutes the rising sun, pursues the flying day !
 I saw her, ghastly as a tyrant's dream,
 Perch on a trembling pyramid of night,
 Beneath which earth and all her realms pavilioned lay
 In visions of the dawning undelight,
(*Hellas*, ll. 940—945.)

Undelight ! What a word ! and what a way to describe a cataclysm ! Was it worth Shelley's while to coin such a monstrosity for the sake of such a bathos ?

In the next stanza we read:—

Oh bear me . . . to some toppling promontory proud
 Of solid tempest whose black pyramid,
 Riven, overhangs the founts intensely bright'ning
 Of those dawn-tinted deluges of fire.

Here is the same picture. In both we have the "pyramid" of darkness above, and in both we *should* have the flaming dawn beneath. "Undelight" should be "underlight."—I am, etc.,

E. MARSH.

5, Raymond Buildings, Grays Inn. January 8th. 1924.

HYMNS HAPPY AND UNHAPPY.

(To the Editor of THE LONDON MERCURY)

SIR,—Mr. Geoffrey Dearmer in his amusing article in your November number quotes

The old man, meek and mild,
 The priest of Israel, slept ;
 His watch the Temple child,
 The little Levite, kept.

and describes the verse as "libellous," doubtless alluding to the fact that there is no mention in the Biblical narrative of Eli's being asleep or of Samuel's keeping watch. They are both merely "laid down."

But does he perhaps also refer to the story of the Sunday School urchin, who, on being asked by his teacher to choose a hymn, said: "Please may we have that one about the chap what *pinched the old man's watch* ?"—Yours, etc.,

W. TREGO WEBB.

7, Scarsdale Villas, Kensington, W.8.

BENTLEY PRIORY.

(To the Editor of THE LONDON MERCURY)

SIR,—In the review of Lord Ernest Hamilton's book *Old Days and New* which appeared in the December issue of THE LONDON MERCURY Sir Chartres Biron says, "The whole story, with its setting of Bentley Priory, reads exactly like a chapter out of *The Young Duke*," adding "and now Bentley Priory has been turned into an hotel." Some of your readers might be interested to know that Bentley Priory has undergone another change: it is now, and has been since 1909, a girls' school.—Yours, etc.,

MARY DOWDING.

Cross Lanes, Roehampton, S.W.15.

A TYPOGRAPHICAL CURIOSITY.

(To the Editor of THE LONDON MERCURY)

SIR,—In the present remarkable revival of printing that is taking place it may be of interest to mention a typographical curiosity that may have escaped the general notice. This is the use of specific forms of certain letters in connection with the end of a line, the foot of a letter being continued in a short dash or flourish to preserve the marginal alignment, to obviate the need for excessive spacing throughout the line. In the case before me, a book printed at Rome in 1696, a, e and n are throughout treated in this way, and the effect is not displeasing.—Yours, etc.,

MAX JUDGE.

3, Loudoun Road, N.W.8. 18th January, 1924.



A MEXICAN LANDSCAPE. Woodcut by H. Glintenkamp.

Book Production Notes

SOME MORE REVIVALS OF OLD TYPES

THE prospectus of Mr. Stanley Morison's *Four Centuries of Fine Printing*, which is announced by Messrs. Ernest Benn, is of great interest even apart from the sumptuous book which it heralds; for it is printed from type copied as nearly as possible from the roman type designed for Aldus of Venice by Francesco Griffo of Bologna. The most famous book for which it was used was the *Hypnerotomachia* of Poliphilus, which Aldus printed in 1499. The measure of the page in that book is just that of *THE LONDON MERCURY*; and by the courtesy of the Lanston Monotype Corporation I am able to reproduce a portion of one of its pages in facsimile as a specimen of the revived letter. That has not quite the excellence of Jenson's roman type, and it shows that tendency to compression or narrowness in the "set" which marks the beginning of decadence. Nevertheless it is a beautiful letter, and its reproduction is another signal success achieved by the Monotype Corporation in their revival of the best of old types. Aldus's famous italic came a few years later than the printing of the Poliphilus. That chosen by the Monotype Corporation for use with the revived roman is also shown on the opposite page, where the specimen tells its own history. Aldus, like nearly all the old printers, printed with his type set close and solid. So set, it shows to much better advantage than in the prospectus of Mr. Morison's forthcoming book, for which it has been cast on a body larger than its own—18-point instead of 16-point—making it look as if it were leaded.

Mr. Morison's book is likely to prove the most comprehensive and even the most valuable of all the books which treat of the history of printing.

BASKERVILLE

PENROSE'S ANNUAL for 1923, it may be remembered, introduced the Monotype version of Garamond's type, which was used for many well-printed books last year. *Penrose* for 1924 is printed in a new 14-point "Baskerville," which the Lanston Monotype Corporation has copied from the type in which John Baskerville printed his *Virgil* in 1757. In re-cutting, the type seems to have gained a little in weight. It is all the better for that; for Baskerville's own type, like Caslon's, which he tried to copy with improvements of his own, is a little thin and wiry for printing in the modern way. The Lanston Monotype Corporation propose to issue the type in all the usual sizes up to 36-point.

Baskerville's type was imitated in the eighteenth century by other English and Scottish founders; amongst them, by Isaac Moore, of Bristol, a partner in Fry's typefoundry in that city, who issued a specimen sheet in 1766. Stephenson, Blake and Co. Ltd. of Sheffield are the present representatives of the Bristol firm; and they are now casting the type from the matrices struck from Moore's punches. Under the name of "Baskerville Old Face" they issue the revived type in fourteen sizes from 6-point to 72-point. The typefounders have kindly set this page in the 12-point size of their "Baskerville." The headings show two of the larger sizes.

B. H. NEWDIGATE

POLIPHILLO INCOMINCIA IL SECONDO LIBRO DI
LA SVA HYPNEROTOMACHIA. NEL QUALE PO-
LIA ET LVI DISERTABONDI, IN QUALE MODO ET
VARIO CASO NARRANO INTER CALARIAMEN-
TE IL SVO INAMORAMENTO.



E MIE DEBILE VOCE TALE O GRA-
tiose & diue Nymphe absone perueneráno &
inconcíne alla uostra benigna audiétia, quale
laterifica raucitate del urinante Esacho al sua-
ue canto dela piangeuole Philomela. Nondi-
meno uolendo io cum tuti gli mei exili cona-
ti del intellecto, & cum la mia paucula sufficié-
tia di satiffare alle uostre piaceuole petitione,

non ristaro al potere. Lequale semota qualúque hesitatione epse piu che
si congruerebbe altronde, dignamente meritano piu uberrimo fluuio di
eloquentia, cum troppo piu rotunda elegantia & cum piu exornata poli-
tura di pronútiato, che in me per alcuno pacto non si troua, di cõseguire
il suo gratioso affecto. Ma a uui Celibe Nymphe & adme alquáto, quan-
túche & confusa & incomptaméte fringultiéte haro in qualche portiu-
cula gratificato assai. Quando uoluntarosa & diuota a gli desii uostri &
postulato me prestaro piu presto cum lanimo nó mediocre prompto hu-
mile parendo, che cum enucleata tersa, & uenusta eloquentia placédo. La
prisca dunque & ueterrima geneologia, & prosapia, & il fatale mio amore
garrulando ordire. Onde gia essendo nel uostro uenerando conuentuale

Portions of a page of the Hypnerotomachia, printed by Aldus at Venice in 1499, set in facsimile in the Poliphilus type of the Lanston Monotype Corporation, Ltd. For use with this type the Corporation has cut an italic whose form is based upon that employed by Antonio Blado (1515-1567), printer to the Holy See. This italic was probably designed by the "writer of apostolic briefs," Ludovico de Henricis, alias Vicentino, who, besides compiling the first copy-book (1522), printed & published in Rome on his own account.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES & NEWS

Correspondence from readers on all subjects of bibliographical interest is invited. Our Correspondent will, to the best of his ability, answer all queries addressed to him.

GENERAL NOTES

FROM the Editor's shelf I have stolen *Books in Black or Red*, by Mr. Edmund Lester Pearson (New York: Macmillan), a work which is not strictly bibliographical, but which, since one of its chief ingredients is gossip about the collecting of books, I take leave to review in these notes. The author, as I infer from some remarks of his, is on the staff of the New York Public Library, and in the *Bulletin* of that institution one of the chapters of this book—that called *An American Eccentric*, first appeared. The Eccentric with which this chapter deals is Timothy Dexter—self-styled Lord Timothy Dexter—who was born in 1748 and died in 1806. Most of his life was spent in the Massachusetts town of Newburyport; and the foundation of his fortune (which was considerable) was laid—according to an agreeable, if doubtfully historic, story—by his sending 42,000 warming-pans to the West Indies, where, though the climate rendered such articles unnecessary in their intended sphere of utility, they found a ready and profitable sale as cooking utensils. Dexter, fortune once achieved, lived in great style—"although he always made it a point to be sober in the morning, for the transaction of business"—and my heart warms to him when I learn that he appointed one Jonathan Plummer as his own personal poet laureate, with a salary, suit of livery, cocked hat, gold-headed cane and all complete. But what gives Dexter his chief claim upon those interested in books, is that in 1802 he published, in Salem, a booklet called *A Pickle for the Knowing Ones*, a work which was originally entirely without punctuation. Of this omission some too particular readers had the temerity to complain, and to a later edition the author added half a page of mixed stops, with instructions to the readers of the book to "peper and solt it as they please." Others of Mr. Pearson's chapters deal with literary hoaxes, and, since he admits to being himself the author of a highly successful thing of the kind, the reviewer should, I suppose, scan this book with an eagle eye, and check its every fact with a library of works of reference. But I confess that I have done no such thing, but read Mr. Pearson's chapters with no thought beyond enjoyment—whether of truth or of fiction. At his best Mr. Pearson writes very well, and he has an agreeable wit, as when he remarks that "a Thackeray or a Dickens novel in its 'original parts' may thrill a collector, as one of the rarer triangular Cape of Good Hope Stamps could once have thrilled me. Otherwise it is about as convenient as an automobile in its original parts"—from which it will appear that Mr. Pearson is not a bibliophile of the orthodox type. It must be confessed, however, that parts of this book are scrappy, and not up to the standard which the author himself sets in his happiest pages—and above all in his account of a marvellous bibliographical hoax, which was practised in the Belgian town of Binche in the year 1840. This tale is so good that I will not spoil it by attempting to outline it here. Let my reader purchase *Books in Black or Red* for himself—though what he will have to pay for it I cannot say, since my copy

has no indication of price upon it. I ought to add that this book has many illustrations, including a portrait of Lord Timothy Dexter, and some pleasing reproductions of the covers of such fearful "dime novels" as *Double Dan the Dastard: or, The Pirates of the Pecos*.

THE latest issue (Vol. IV, Number 3) of *The Library* (Oxford University Press, 5s., or 15s. annually) contains an obituary notice of the late Francis Jenkinson, University Librarian at Cambridge, by Mr. Stephen Gaselee. There is also Mr. R. W. Chapman's *Notes on Eighteenth-Century Bookbuilding*, a paper which was read before the Bibliographical Society last October, and which should be consulted by everyone interested in eighteenth-century bibliography. Other articles in this number are *The Hortus Floridus of Crispijin Vaude Pas The Younger*, by Mr. S. Savage; *Letters and Booklists of Thomas Chard (or Chase) of London, 1583-4*, by Mr. Robert Jahn; and *Massinger's Autograph Corrections In The Duke of Milan, 1623*, by Dr. W. W. Greg. Dr. Greg's article is based on a copy, now in the Dyce Collection at South Kensington, of the first quarto of *The Duke of Milan*, presented by Massinger to his "Honorable Friende Sir Francis Foliambe Knight and Baronet."

FROM the Chelsea Publishing Company, of 16, Royal Hospital Road, S.W., I have received a copy of *A Bibliography of First Editions of Books Illustrated by Walter Crane*, compiled by Miss Gertrude C. E. Massé, with a preface by Mr. Heywood Sumner. The price of this book is seven shillings and sixpence. Miss Massé has not included Crane's series of children's picture-books, since she has found it impossible to trace a complete set of these, for the reason that the children for whom they were designed loved them so much that they wore them into a thousand pieces. Of a few other books illustrated by Crane, Miss Massé has also not been able to find copies—a proof that it is high time that one of our public collections should set about bringing together a complete set of Crane's work—for copies of all books illustrated by him must surely exist somewhere. The collations in this bibliography are not very full, and no exact transcripts of title-pages are given. But the work will be of use to collectors—and moreover, I trust that Miss Massé will be able to complete and expand it in a second edition, for Crane was a delightful and individual artist, whose work deserves careful record and study.

THE prospectus of a work called *Facsimiles of English Literary Autographs, 1550-1650*, selected and edited by Messrs. J. P. Gilson, W. W. Greg, Hilary Jenkinson, R. B. McKenna and A. W. Pollard, has reached me from the Oxford University Press. This prospectus says that the proposal (which is subject to modification) is to publish three parts, containing in all thirty plates illustrating the hands of dramatists, thirty those of poets, and thirty those of prose-writers, with an additional ten plates held in reserve for new material. The first part (dramatists) is at present in preparation. Each plate will measure 12 by 8 inches, and the subscription will be £4 4s., or three yearly payments of £1 10s. each. As to the method of publication I had better quote the prospectus verbatim:—

The work will be produced as for a society; that is, the editors will give their services, the money received will as far as possible be spent on the work, any balance that may remain being devoted to some similar object, and audited accounts will be

printed. The same subscription therefore will be required from all members, and no discounts can be given: if agents are employed they must be paid by the subscribers. The editors reserve the right to refuse any subscription without assigning a reason.

It is also pointed out that the importance of the study of handwriting is two-fold. First of all there is the identification of handwritings as a guide to authorship. And secondly, there is the consideration that in order to make reasonable textual emendations in a printed text, it is necessary to have some knowledge of the kind of hand in which the original manuscript was written. This publication, for the excellence of which the editors' names are sufficient guarantee, should be of great service to scholars. Those desirous of subscribing should send their names and addresses to Dr. W. W. Greg, Park Lodge, Wimbledon, S.W. 19.

MESSRS. GRAFTON, of 7 and 8 Coptic House, W.C., announce what should be a work of importance and interest to bibliographers. This is Mr. Henry R. Plomer's *English Printers' Ornaments*, a quarto which is to appear in two forms—five hundred copies at two guineas each, and seventy-five copies on hand-made paper, and with extra illustrations, at five guineas each. This book is to cover the subject of printers' ornaments—"the decoration of books apart from book illustration"—from the fifteenth century to the nineteenth. Mr. Plomer, as many readers of these notes will know, is the author of the admirable dictionaries of printers and booksellers printed by the Bibliographical Society.

NOTES ON SALES

ITEMS FROM THE BOOKSHOPS AND CATALOGUES

FROM time to time, in these notes, I have commented upon catalogues of autograph letters and manuscripts; but it has not been often that I have had to discuss so interesting a thing of this kind as the last list (number 380) published by Messrs. Quaritch, of 11 Grafton Street, W.1. The importance and variety of the two hundred and forty documents described in this catalogue are astonishing. The very first item is Joseph Addison's receipt for the sum of £107 10s. received by him from Jacob Tonson for the full copyright of *Cato*, and for this Messrs. Quaritch ask £45. Then, glancing through the succeeding pages of this list, I see such names as those of Queen Anne, Francis Bacon (three letters), Beethoven (a page of music in his hand), George Borrow, Charlotte Brontë, Sir Thomas Browne (a letter to John Evelyn, priced £68), Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Robert Browning, Burns (the original patent appointing him "One of the Surveyors, Messengers, Gangers, and Officers . . . for the measuring, and attending Malt that shall be shipped for Exportation; and for the seizing of all Brandy, Arrack, Rum, Spirits, Strong Waters, Coffee, Tea, Chocolate and Cocoa Nuts, which shall be unlawfully imported"—this costs £550), Byron, Michael Angelo, Charles II, Oliver Cromwell, Sir Francis Drake, John Dryden, Henry Fielding, Thomas Gray—and so on throughout the alphabet. There are no fewer than nine of Dr. Johnson's letters, mostly addressed in the years 1783 and 1784 to William Bowles of Heale, and there is a holograph poem of Charles Lamb's.

A letter, dated July 27th, 1525, and written by Martin Luther to John, Duke of Saxony, is priced £500; and for fifty pounds more can be bought the autograph manuscript of Anthony Munday's play *John a Kent and John a Cumber*. Another attractive (and less expensive) dramatic manuscript is the copy of James Thomson and David Mallet's *Masque of Alfred*, which was submitted to the Lord Chamberlain in 1751 for licensing purposes, one of those who signed the application being David Garrick. This is to be had for £31 10s. *Alfred* is, it need hardly be added, famous as the play in which *Rule Britannia* appears, and was first performed in 1740. But the most important item in this catalogue is the original holograph manuscript of the 1842 edition of Tennyson's poems—though only two of the pieces are complete. This imperfection is probably due to the poet's habit of burning the manuscript leaves after having corrected the proofs. Forty-two folio pages remain, however, and they were given by Tennyson to Aubrey De Vere, the latter having rescued them from the waste-paper basket. The price of this important manuscript is £2,000.

IN their latest list (number 211) Messrs. Pickering & Chatto, of 1 King Street, St. James's, have brought together about six hundred books and tracts published between 1641 and 1644—a feat which is some indication of the enormous stock of English books which this firm must possess. Most of the items in this catalogue relate to the Civil War, and are chiefly of interest to historians and antiquaries. But there are some of more general appeal—such as a copy of the earliest issue of the first edition of Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici*, duodecimo, 1642, of which the price is £85. Many of the books herein offered by Messrs. Pickering and Chatto cost only a few shillings, and should give the less wealthy type of collector some excellent sport.

CATALOGUE number 130, issued recently by Mr. Frank Hollings, of 7, Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.2, is chiefly concerned with modern books, many of them in fine bindings. There is offered in it, for instance, a set of the first editions of Mr. Thomas Hardy's novels and plays, from 1871 to 1917, forty-seven volumes in all, uniformly bound, for £220. There are, too, many examples of the Dover, Kelmscott, Ashendene, Vale, Nonesuch and other modern presses. Collectors of books illustrated by such artists as Walter Crane, Arthur Rackham and Hugh Thomson will also find things to interest them in this list. An item which should have some appeal to the followers of Mr. Lytton Strachey is a copy of Queen Victoria's *Leaves from the Journal of our Life in the Highlands*, 1868, presented by her to one of her most distinguished subjects, and inscribed "To Sir Garnet Wolseley, G.C.B., etc., in recollection of his visit to Balmoral on his return from his brilliant and victorious campaign in Egypt; from Victoria, R.I., Oct. 31, 1882." This relic is priced £9 in Mr. Hollings's list.

I. A. WILLIAMS



TWO MEXICANS. Woodcut by H. Glintenkamp

CHRONICLES

DRAMA

GRUACH. By GORDON BOTTOMLEY ; PHŒNIX. By LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE. St. Martin's Theatre.

LOVE IN A VILLAGE. By ISAAC BICKERSTAFFE. Music by DR. ARNE. Everyman Theatre.

A PUPPET SHOW. By WILLIAM SIMMONDS. Art-Workers' Guild.

CHARLEY'S AUNT. By BRANDON THOMAS. Comedy Theatre.

GRUACH and *Phœnix* were put on at the St. Martin's, on January 20th, by Mr. Basil Dean, in his "Playbox" series. The producer of *Hassan* is to be congratulated on his decision to attempt the plays of contemporary poets. Those dramas, excluding social comedy, which have lived have all been the work of poets. The restoration of contact between the poets and the theatre is much to be desired. It is certain that only by that means can a great dramatic literature come into being (presuming that the men are alive who could write it) and it is equally certain that authors will never get the sense of the theatre unless they are given a chance of experiment in the theatre. In the Elizabethan age it appears that any young poet of promise could get a show. The early works of Shakespeare and the others were bad, but they learnt by their mistakes. Mr. Bottomley and Mr. Abercrombie are hardly in the first flush of youth, but a beginning is a beginning. Mr. Dean should next scour about for promising works, however patchy, by men under thirty.

The evening at the St. Martin's would have been an education to any man who lacks a sense of the difference between reading and hearing. Mr. Bottomley's *Gruach* is a beautiful thing to read and is dead on the stage ; Mr. Abercrombie's play, whatever its defects, does speak and does act, yet is not at all good to read. He at least has written for the stage ; Mr. Bottomley, however undeliberately, has written for the study.

Mr. Bottomley's play deals with the first meeting of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. He himself has already written a prologue to *King Lear*, and another dramatist, Mr. Ervine, is writing a sequel to *The Merchant of Venice*. The practice is not entirely without sense ; most good dramatists have treated legendary subjects with ready-made characters and Lear and Portia are a kind of myths. Yet the fashion may be deplored if it leads to *Tons of Falstaff* or *Hamlet's Aunt* (at the University of Wittenberg). Mr. Bottomley's Macbeth, on an errand from King Duncan to Inverness, is overtaken by night and snow, and finds shelter in the castle of Conan, who is about to marry Gruach. Macbeth is left to sleep in the hall by the fire ; Gruach sleep-walks and betrays her love at first sight ; the two elope. As a reading play *Gruach* is full of thought, feeling and good lines : a fine essay in literary criticism : a convincing prologue to Shakespeare's story. On the stage it goes to pieces. Some of the language is too stilted to be spoken ; some is so verbosely descriptive or picturesque that

the actors are forced to gabble it ; there is too little opportunity for the suiting of gesture to the word ; everything is too long ; and finally, after the climax has been passed there is a long series of anti-climaxes that add nothing, and one of the most ineffective curtains ever seen on any stage. Miss Thorndike and Mr. Malcolm Keen did their best ; but they were at their wits' end what to do. Their long colloquy in the midnight hall was not assisted by the producer. The poet suggested that it was bitter outside and cold inside. In the first scene the back cloth showed a warm mediterranean twilight ; in the next the snow fell against a sky of caterpillar green, and the hall was obviously as warm as the orchid houses at Kew. The great dialogue would have been immensely helped had the only light come from Gruach's candle and the fire glimmering upon Macbeth's armour and her nightdress ; the two should have been islands of intense speech and feeling in a sea of darkness and silence. As it was, something like broad daylight remained and the mood had to be created by the actors alone. Mr. Dean (as also in the moonlight scene of *Hassan*) should learn how to darken stage and auditorium entirely ; he should also be more reserved in his use of his new lighting system, which tempts him to employ all the colours of the chameleon on every possible occasion.

It is depressing to have to say this about *Gruach* ; I cannot understand why a manager should try it before *The Riding to Lithend* which has never been seen in London. It is still more distasteful to say what one thinks about *Phœnix*, done by an eminent man of letters who has produced good poetry and does not, I am sure, realise how obnoxious a play he has now written. The production of *Phœnix* was as good as that of *Gruach* was bad : the scene was brilliantly designed and a more competent cast could not be brought together. Miss Barbara Gott, Mr. Leslie Banks (unconvincingly padded), Miss Mary Clare and Mr. Robert Harris acted superbly. The stage interpretation was more farcical than the book suggested : this was no doubt made necessary by the impossibility of Mr. Abercrombie's notion of making a "tragic farce" with tragical figures and comic on the stage together all the time, as though Dogberry and Falstaff were fooling in Desdemona's death chamber : the whole thing had to be played farcically. However played *Phœnix* would have been disgusting. As well make *The Cenci* into a comedy. The author appeared not to know what he was driving at, or to have a very imperfect conception of his principal character, Rodope, who was an impossible mixture of the light wanton, the hot sensualist and the cold calculating harlot. And even had he been sure what he was doing his light treatment of such a plot—a mother setting her son to cut out her husband in the "affections" of a whore—would have been revolting. The "strong" language in places did not offend ; but the whole thing seemed like the made-up attempt to be bold and violent of a naturally gentle and studious man. Yet, as I said, this abominable and unconvincing farce did show a gift for the stage, for dialogue and dramatic action, that Mr. Bottomley's play lamentably lacked. *Phœnix* rattled along, and that is a great quality.

It was a thousand pities that *Love in a Village* was not given a longer run ; the entertainment at the Everyman was delightful. *Love in a Village* was, after *The Beggar's Opera*, one of the most popular of eighteenth century light operas. Mr. Julian Herbage's arrangement of book and music was good ; the scenery by Mr. Harold Scott was good ; the dresses by Mr. Rupert Lee were charming ; the acting was only good in places. But even had the cast been very bad the

plot, artificially artless, runs so merrily and the songs are so delicious that the play would have been worth seeing. It has not quite the variety of *The Beggar's Opera* and the music is mostly Dr. Arne's instead of being traditional. Yet I cannot but think that a West End production would have a chance of success, it is so pretty and gay, and the music so bewitching, whether rollicking, tender or pert, like the admirable song of the maid Margery. The chief successes were Mr. Arthur Wynn as Hawthorn, the sporting farmer with dog and gun out of an old print; Mr. David Brynley as Young Meadows; and also Mrs. A. B. Tapping, perfect as Justice Woodcock's fat and voluble sister.

Mr. Simmond's puppets are notoriously the best in England, and his rare visits from the Cotswolds to London should be watched for by everyone who enjoys good puppetry. His invention is as admirable as his skill is astonishing, the beautiful and the comic being delightfully intermingled. The loveliest though doubtless not the most difficult of his pieces was the Harlequinade, in which Harlequin danced with ineffable grace; and there were moments of sheer beauty in the woodland scene, a scene of faun, centaur and stricken deer. The scene-shifters' interlude was very rich, and "A Seaport Town" gave us both comedy and genuine pathos. "The Farmyard," in which farm-life, lovers courting, the fox stealing the grey goose, the household waking, cocks crowing, cows lowing, and the day's work starting, were shown in due sequence, was the most imposing effort of all; a little too long, but full of rich moments. Throughout Mr. Simmonds, to his wife's accompaniment, sang folk-songs with great gusto as well as manipulating his marionettes. The illusion was often complete; we traversed worlds like Watteau's and Morland's in complete belief, recovering ourselves to gape at the astonishing technical dexterity of the dancing.

I put *Charley's Aunt* in the list merely because I happen to have gone and found, to my surprise, that I was as heartily amused at it as I was when twelve years old. If one rolls about and weeps with laughter, why deny it? The children around me skipped like young rams. The dialogue is very good, and there never was a farce better constructed. It is unobtrusively becoming a small classic; perhaps our only classic farce, unless *Box and Cox* be reckoned. Superior remarks about people pouring tea into top hats do not affect the matter; the thing is alive with the life of the stage and its contemporaries have died.

J. C. SQUIRE

THE FINE ARTS

SOME BOOKS

- LANDSCAPE PAINTING. By LEWIS HIND. Chapman and Hall. 25s.
- THE NATIONAL GALLERY: ITALIAN SCHOOLS. By Sir CHARLES HOLMES. G. Bell and Sons. 27s. net
- THE WATER COLOURS OF JOHN SILL COTMAN. By A. P. OPPÉ. The Studio. 10s. 6d. net.
- THE ETCHINGS OF SEYMOUR HAYDEN. By MALCOLM SALAMAN. Halton and Truscott Smith. 42s.
- JAPANESE COLOUR PRINTS. By LAWRENCE BINYON and J. J. O'BRIEN SEXTON. Ernest Benn. £4 14s. 6d.
- CHINESE PAINTING. By ARTHUR WALEY. Ernest Benn. 73s. 6d.
- MURAL PAINTINGS IN ENGLISH CHURCHES DURING THE MIDDLE AGES. By FRANK H. KENDON. The Bodley Head. 10s. 6d.
- OLD ENGLISH SPORTING PRINTS AND THEIR HISTORY. By RALPH NEVILL. The Studio. £3 3s. net.

THE history of a classified subject in art always runs the risk of being a sort of giving of examination marks according as the artist approximates towards an ideal standard of treatment of the subject. The historian tends to lose touch with the important thing, the unique individual quality, and gazes with glazed eyes at the generalized subject. Mr. Lewis Hind is by no means free from this vitiating tendency which frequently obscures his genuine (though over exclamatory) appreciation of pictures. Mr. Hind has made a fascinating collection of photographs of landscapes, and he throws light on unfamiliar aspects of the work of some famous artists; but he seems to see a progressive accumulation of landscape discoveries, and while he admires, say Victor Breughel, for his epical and decorative qualities, he cannot give him full marks because at his time "atmosphere" had not been discovered, still less the luminous treatment of the impressionists. Even Turner who, in the opinion of Mr. Hind, rivalled and outsoared everything in the past, is now left behind: for "landscape painting has, of course, advanced and broadened (*sic*) since Turner." It is on this presupposition that he considers he is praising Claude Lorraine, when he writes of a drawing by him that it would "hold its own in the best of modern exhibitions." The cart is before the horse. Sir Charles Holmes's book is ostensibly intended for the guidance of visitors to the National Gallery; but actually it is written for the practical student of painting. The question which Sir Charles sets himself to answer is, what practical good can the student derive from a study of the Italian paintings at the Gallery? and his answer develops into a continuation of his volume entitled *The Science of Painting*. Sir Charles seems to believe that there can be, and in fact is, such a science, and he looks

forward to the time when, well primed in this science, critics will all agree, and artists will know for certain the appropriate way of treating each class of carefully pigeon-holed subject. A sort of penny-in-the-slot business! Thus Sir Charles visualises art history as the analysis of a development in the technical realisation of certain abstract categories, such as form, space, colour, light, and so on. Interwoven with this scientific discussion there is much sound and valuable critical appreciation, and the book is written with the author's usual fluency and lucidity.

The popularity of Cotman is steadily increasing, and will be given a further impetus by *The Studio* autumn number, with its fine selection of colour reproductions. Surely the Medici Society will find it a paying proposition to bring out a thoroughly good Cotman portfolio! It cannot be too often repeated, at the moment, that water-colours *can* be reproduced, and oil paintings cannot. In his introduction Mr. Oppé analyses carefully the various technical changes in Cotman's work. His defence of the later more atmospheric style is interesting; but I still feel that Cotman was endeavouring to compete with Turner, and was going against his real sentiment, which attained to such fine expression in the clear cut contrasts of the *Greta Bridge* and the gracious shapes of his tree studies.

Seymour Hayden was rarely, if ever, of the first-class as an etcher, but he possessed, so to speak, a very attractive brogue, and spoke of the English country in rich, sonorous tones, which could not fail to appeal. His work is clouded by uncertainty, and a faint suggestion of sentimentality; but there is a foundation of real emotion which gives a permanent value to his best etchings. These, in my opinion, are the etchings which are also the most popular:—*Sunset in Ireland*, *On the Test*, *The Agamemnon* (not the mezzotint). The present volume has a very good selection of reproductions, which repay study. Mr. Salaman betrays a strange predilection for roundabout ways of saying things, for instance: "It was chiefly the riparian landscape of the upper reaches that called his needle to the copper."

Mr. Binyon's volume on Japanese colour prints, and Mr. Waley's volume on Chinese painting bear the stamp of standard works. Mr. Binyon has assembled all the information which, I imagine, a collector could desire in the way of lists of publishers' marks, censors' seals, chronological tables, and so on. To the general reader these lists, and also much of the detailed information about the artists will be indigestible; but if these are skipped he will find a great deal of interesting and illuminating writing about the leading men and their works. The volume includes sixteen coloured and thirty black and white reproductions. How one misses the colours in the latter!

Mr. Waley combines the exactitude and learning of a scholar with keen æsthetic sensibility. Unfortunately the material available is fragmentary, and it is difficult to give any very coherent description of the lives and work of the painters. The present stage is largely one of examination and arrangement of sources. Mr. Waley is working all the time at first hand from the original sources, and, although he wears his learning lightly, he makes full use of it. As he himself points out, his book is as much concerned with Chinese art tradition as with the actual paintings. Among the most interesting chapters are those dealing with the Chinese philosophies and æsthetic views, particularly that containing translations of records of the Zen philosophy and its followers, who are very humorous at a safe historical distance. Only an expert can

criticise Mr. Waley's detailed conclusions, but it can be said that under his slightly satirical and sceptical treatment the Chinese come to life, although, aesthetically, his views err on the side of purism. The mysterious importance of the six canons of Hsieh Hoh disappears beneath his common-sense explanation. That does not matter. But I think that it does matter that even the faintest objections should be raised against the introduction by the Chinese of a spiritual element into their art. Had it not been for this spirituality, Mr. Waley's erudition would have been worthless.

The title of Mr. Kendon's book is misleading. The subject is not really primitive English painting, but English mediæval religious beliefs, and the paintings, or rather the subjects of the paintings, are used to illustrate and confirm the views put forward by the author. This is a perfectly legitimate procedure, but a list of the subjects of the pictures is almost enough for the purpose, and it does not matter very much whether the paintings survive or not, or were good or bad.

The fact leaps to our notice from most of the reproductions of prints in Mr. Nevill's handsome book, that the least living part of these prints is the sport, and what has really interested the draughtsmen are the landscapes and the motley colours of the groups of people, and the general suggestion of activity and movement. Not even Henry Alken (1785-1851), who is probably the best of the sporting artists, and is by no means insensitive to landscape, can approach the French artist Gericault, or even Degas, as a draughtsman of horses. James Pollard, who may be ranked next to Alken, also owes his attractiveness to his town and country scenes, rather than to the sporting events depicted. Mr. Nevill's introduction is heavy with names, but is not particularly satisfying as a critical or historical study.

HOWARD HANNAY

MUSIC IN A DEMOCRACY

THE connecting link between the various utterances at the Conference of the Incorporated Society of Musicians, held at Cambridge at the beginning of the year, was clearly the position of music in a democracy. Not having been able to be present, one is obliged to rely on reports. These have been distressingly meagre; one knows from the mere names of the speakers that they must have talked a good deal more sense than the reporter has been able to assimilate. It will be more useful therefore to discuss the questions raised than to criticise what was said about them.

Sir Hugh Allen substituted for the vague and picturesque "man in the street" the more precise and prosaic "one's self viewed objectively." One has accordingly tried to view oneself objectively, but it is not an easy thing to do. One pictures oneself sitting in the balcony of St. James' Hall at the age of eleven listening to Norman Neruda's (as she then was) quartet in awe and delight, wondering incidentally why fiddles squeaked like slatepencils; or at the age of fourteen listening to the "Surprise" Symphony given by a "monster" orchestra (probably what we should now call normal) at Aldershot; and attending mainly to the drummer; or, two years later, turning over the pages for Major Alexander Ewing while he played, sang and expounded his way (in "Aunt Judy's" absence) through the short score of the *Flying Dutchman*, then new to this country and with its claim to be music not yet thoroughly established. Was that one's objective self? Whether or no, one would be inclined to translate the "man in the street" by "one who knows a little and wants to know more." For if he did not know a little he would not be in the street—*i.e.* in the park, the "prom," the concert or music hall—and if he did not want to know more we could be of no use to him. Sir Hugh told us that the real question was, of what use we could be to him, but the reporter does not seem to have caught the answer.

For that we have to look to Sir Dan Godfrey and Mr. Adrian Boult. Mr. Boult was discussing what he called, and we agree, the elusive subject of the concert programme. The concert-giver has usually to make his programme not what he would but what he can. We catch sight of the numerous difficulties when eminent singers publish, not their programme, but the mere fact that they will sing at a certain hour and place—a procedure which lends colour to the abominable heresy that the singer is of more importance than the song. But, supposing these difficulties adjusted, Mr. Boult tells us that the first thing that programmes require is unity in their variety. They ought not to be, what they too often are, a series of music hall turns. The oratorio supplied this unity; that was its great claim on our esteem. Having hissed that and its successor, the cantata, out of court it is our business to find some other principle of unity if we do not want the man-in-the-concert-hall to be bored. We have an object lesson in operatic gala-nights, which have a special boredom of their own, apart from that which is the exalted privilege of all court functions. But our client, or patron, also wants a little more help in the way of mere information. He comes with no consecutive knowledge, with but little general background

to the particular items, as they are well called, that are put before him, and these are all too long to be grasped as unities *an und für sich*. Sometimes the right man—but too often the wrong man—explains *viva voce*; sometimes the “analytical” programme hits the mark, but much more often misses it. There is a great art in the way a wise mother puts bread pudding or sago without jam before her children and persuades them it is just what they wanted. Mr. Dolmetsch is one of few who possess this art on the concert platform, as the Macdonald of the Isles, when he was Mr. Alexander Bosville, possessed it at the tip of a curly pen; and there must surely be others among the unemployed for whom we are so anxious to find work—people who could talk or write freshly, and not as a task. It is no good telling us to notice something when the bassoons enter with muted violas, when we don’t know whether a bassoon is blown or bowed, how or why things are muted or whether viola is or is not a misprint for violin. What we want to know is something about the general sound and pace of the thing—enough to be able to identify it—how long it will take and when exactly it will begin. (Rustics invariably speak the name of the song after they have sung it.) Then, if you like to tell us whether the work is early or late, who else was trying to do what at the time when it was written, how far they succeeded in comparison with our hero, what the conditions of music-making then were—that this music was intended, for instance, as an accompaniment to the elector’s ombre-table, or that this is the concerto in which Berlioz’s famous clarinettist caused the women to hide behind their fans and the men to stand up to see, or the overture into which the trombone put a little curly-cue of his own “(see Ex. 6)” —well, it may help along the idea that music is a human thing. But we don’t want to read any more that Chopin played the piano with his soul, or that he was the piano, or that the piano was Chopin, or what kind of sunset or storm or sea-scape Mr. Niecks or somebody saw in a certain Etude, or any of those nebulous things that may be all as they are and yet the music go straight to, as it came straight from, the heart.

Mr. Boulton is not at all nebulous, and Sir Dan Godfrey even less so. He has a long train of facts, and the engine to which they are hitched is the plain statement that “it is the duty of municipalities to take a deep interest in music in all its aspects, and in art generally, because it is incumbent upon them to do everything to elevate and refine the people.” He just says out boldly what everybody who has read the past and tries to read the future has been long thinking. What is the good of being an ostrich and hiding one’s head in the sand from the moderate democracy which is here and from the extremer democracy which is coming? We have translated *Panem* by dole, to the disgust even of the recipients, and we do not now want to find for musical entertainments a precedent in *Circenses*. We want music as free as public baths and pleasure grounds, freely given and freely taken, as of right, like fresh air and pure water; and not only on piers and at health resorts, but in factories at the dinner hour or wherever life is apt to be drab. That wish is growing and will soon begin to influence municipal and, perhaps, parliamentary elections. “It is,” to adopt another of his remarks, “hardly too much to say that the greatest benefits which music has in store for humanity will be reached, not through performance but through listening.” Those will always know most about music who actually make it, but those will enjoy most and gain most from it who hear with open ears, who can absorb it unconsciously as part of a liberal education. There is little fear that the standard of the music so promul-

gated will not rise to and keep a high level, for the simple reason that no other will last the distance.

What Sir Dan Godfrey did not say is that Dan Godfreys and Henry Woods and their like are not to be found any day and everywhere. Some might think that that would tell against his argument, since the municipal money would then often be wasted by incapables or incurables. But does it? Men, not merely of such eminence but of such temper and quality as those, are not freaks of Nature. They grow to be what they are on the strength of discouragement and adversity of all sorts—humouring and cajoling, thundering and threatening, compromising or insisting, driving a nail where it would go and taking another when it wouldn't. They thought as much of the happiness of their audience as of the skill of their players, and not at all of themselves. They chose their music not so much for its intrinsic beauty as for its fitness for the purpose in hand. And all this it is open to any man of character to do, and character is, we hope, part of the stock-in-trade and one of the exports of this island. We may hope to grow more of such men, then, and as for discouragement and other bogies, there are plenty of mountains left to climb and dragons to kill.

On the question of amateur and professional the report indicates a lively discussion, but owing to its brevity the argument is hard to follow; the point at issue seems to have been whether each should borrow the virtues of the other or both are in water-tight compartments. Leaving that rather jejune question, if we may suppose that the amateur is a man with a competence, possibly more, and a liberal education, the probability is that he was at a public school; and there the outlook is bettering every day. No one need feel gloomy about the eventual position of music at these schools who remembers that mathematics was not taught at Eton until the year 1835.

A. A. FOX STRANGWAYS

POETRY

POEMS BY LORD BYRON. Selected and Arranged in Chronological Order with a Preface by H. J. C. GRIERSON, Litt.D. Florence Press. Chatto & Windus. 16s.

RELIGIOUS LYRICS OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY. Edited by CARLETON BROWN. Oxford University Press. 10s. 6d.

PARENTALIA AND OTHER POEMS. By J. D. C. PELLOW. Oxford University Press 5s.

ZACHY TRENOY. By RUTH MANNING-SANDERS. Christophers. 5s.

ALL the Florence Press books are good to have and this not least. As a "production" it is cheap; as a publication it has an added interest because it appears just before the trumpeting and discussions of the Centenary. Professor Grierson, whose selection is as good as his introduction is ripe and illuminating, seems to me to exaggerate a little the reaction against Byron. Certainly critics, after applauding his merits in an exaggerated way, proceeded to expose his defects with an equal exaggeration. But that is normal; and it is natural that there comes a point where disputants are exhausted and criticism must take a rest, for it seems that nothing new, for the time being, remains to be said. But Byron was no more unread than Tennyson, against whom an acuter reaction has raged, ever was. When Professor Grierson suggests, with the confirmation of another distinguished professor, that to the living poets Byron is "very much of a shadow" and that the younger of these read nothing but each other and themselves, one wonders where either of these eminent men found, or sought for, their evidence. Not everybody has read *Sardanapalus*, but I should imagine that there are now (as in any recent year) hundreds of literary schoolboys who are familiar with almost everything in Professor Grierson's selection. Where is the living poet—I am not, of course, talking of bad poets, who are numerous and ignorant—to whom the author of *The Vision of Judgment* is a shadow? How can it be supposed that *Don Juan* is unread? Professor Grierson had better wait until the centenary date, when a Niagara of suppressed comment and knowledge on Byron will flow forth. To that date we also may postpone an elaborate estimate and description of Byron: meanwhile those who know their Byron best will most approve this selection, which shows every aspect of Byron's genius. There are a few of the earlier lyrics that I should like to have seen added; but Professor Grierson was doubtless handicapped by lack of space, after rightly including *Beppo* and whole cantos of *Don Juan* and *Childe Harold*.

Mr. Carleton Brown's volume is to be followed by similar volumes on the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries: they are a natural sequel to the great index of Middle English Religious Verse which Mr. Brown compiled for the Bibliographical Society. His objects he says are "to publish hitherto unprinted material; to offer better texts of poems already printed from inferior MS.; to give trustworthy texts of poems that have been printed inaccurately; to bring together texts that are found in scattered and often inaccessible

publications ; above all to represent the lyrical development of the century." His aim is his achievement : the volume, which is enriched by notes and glossary, is a landmark in medieval research. The spelling is not modernised ; the old extra letters are used. But the general reader should not be frightened by these from a collection which is full of good unknown work and even supplies, for the first time, a text of *Quia amore langueo* which fairly represents its original form. We shall return to the subject when the collection is completed : meanwhile from this book and these of Messrs. Sisam and Sidgwick a fair idea can be derived of the riches of our medieval literature, especially as regards metre.

Considerable portions of the books by Mrs. Manning-Sanders and Mr. Pellow have appeared in our own columns. They are both interesting books. Mrs. Manning-Sanders tells a rustic, rather Masfieldian, tale in a manner and with a vivacity all her own. Mr. Pellow is an elegiac poet in temper : meditative, retrospective, quiet. Possibly he has done nothing better than *The Temple*, by which he first became known ; but *After London* is delightful and there is sound thought, feeling and execution in the *English Elegies*. He does not rise to great moments nor carry one off one's feet by his power of vision or music ; but he never completely disappoints.

J. C. S.

FICTION

A POET'S YOUTH. By MARGARET L. WOODS. Chapman and Dodd.
7s. 6d.

JANE—OUR STRANGER. By MARY BORDEN. Heinemann. 7s. 6d.

HERR ARNE'S HOARD. By SELMA LAGERLOF. Gyldeandal. 6s.

SOME years ago, it will be remembered, Professors Harper and Legouis discovered to us a hitherto hidden chapter in Wordsworth's early life, a chapter that told us that the poet, when he finally left the French Revolution to take care of itself, also left behind him a mistress, Marie Anne Vallon (an enthusiastic Royalist to boot—no fervent fellow Republican, so that the familiar plea of intellectual sympathy cannot be allowed) and a daughter, in whose welfare he contrived to take some interest even when his later convictions must have almost persuaded him to doubt her parentage, or even her existence. It was perhaps inevitable that this romantic story should sooner or later be made into the subject of a romance in which our scanty knowledge of the actual facts would be liberally enlarged by the fancies of the novelist. We may thank our stars that it has fallen into such capable hands. In a short Preface, while pointing out that "during a great part of Wordsworth's life, no secret was made of the existence of Annette Vallon and her child," Mrs. Woods protests against the notion, held by some students, that the Vallon episode once formed a part or *The Prelude* and was destroyed by the poet's biographer; and it is clearly her intention to do in a prose romance what Wordsworth himself should have done in a thousand lines or so of his best blank verse. "So far from leading a dull life in comparison with Byron and Shelley, William Wordsworth had had the most adventurous and interesting youth of any poet of the period." This is what she undertakes to show us, and the result is a most skilful and entertaining story. It might have been told, and delightfully told, in the French manner, the light ironical manner, but she has composed it in a mood of romantic earnestness that is itself somewhat Wordsworthian.

She begins with a Prologue in which we are shown the future poet romping with his schoolfellows, on a winter's night at Hawkeshead, and then running far out into the night to brood over Nature. He meets the "dame" with whom he lodges, and after some talk about his future, she declares "The Lord has called thee, William Wordsworth," and the Prologue is ended. It is to be feared that Mr. Drinkwater, who must eventually work round to Wordsworth, will never forgive Mrs. Woods this scene, so much in his own best manner, and, incidentally, so much below the general level of the book. Then we are taken to St. John's, Cambridge. Wordsworth and his friend, Jones, are planning their Long Vacation tour in France. Dorothy appears, with her uncle, and tells the Master that her brother is a poet and actually recites some of his verses to the great man, who is impressed and declares that the verses "might almost be by Collins or Tickell." All this is quite nicely done. The two undergraduates land at Calais (whose citizens act as if they had never seen an Englishman before) and walk south. It is hey-day of the early Revolution; trees of liberty, dances on the green, healths all round—it is a delightful progress; and they arrive at Lyons to rescue a pretty

girl from the unwelcome attentions of a crowd of drunken waggoners. She is Marie Anne, or Annette, Vallon, the daughter of a bourgeois family, but the protégée of a great lady, the old Duchesse de Rastignac. Wordsworth, after some acquaintance with the old lady and Annette, returns to England, and then two years elapse and we find him back again in the district. He hob-nobs with the revolutionaries of Orleans and Blois, particularly with Beaupuy, a Republican officer, attends the Duchess, who finds him rather amusing, and falls in love with Annette. The latter is enjoying the attentions of a philandering and handsome young Englishman, and becomes his mistress for a time. It is his desertion that makes her feel more kindly disposed towards the solemn young poet and philosopher, who is her junior by several years. The Duchess tries to escape to England, and before she leaves asks Wordsworth to look after Annette and make her his wife if he can. But the Revolution is rushing towards the Terror; the Duchess is killed; her chateau is besieged by the mob, but the poet is able to rescue Annette and take her away into the woods to the cottage occupied by his friend's mistress. They hope to be married as soon as they can, and live for a while as man and wife, with the result that Annette is with child. But difficulties of all kinds stand in the way; once when the actual ceremony is about to be performed, a number of people, including one of Annette's brothers, turn up in the most unlikely fashion, and the poet and his mistress are separated. In the end, she remains in the South, while he goes to Paris to work as the English correspondent of the Girondin group, only returning to England (after refusing the bribes of the usual sinister Marat) when he can be of no further use to his party. We last see him, with a letter of introduction from Tom Paine in his hands, in London at a meeting of the Society for Constitutional Information (Godwin, Horne Tooke, Blake—quoting his own verse—are all present), and at the conclusion he learns that war has been declared on the Republic and that Destiny has erected yet another barrier between him and Annette. "Thus suddenly ended the romance of William Wordsworth," we are told, "cut short by no volition, no act of his, but by the irresistible action of a larger Fate than his own. Irresistible as was that Fate, he could not fail to struggle and to agonise against it."

That, of course, is the interpretation we are asked to make, though apart from arranging her chapter of accidents to separate the lovers, Mrs. Woods has also, somewhat inconsistently, made Annette a rather trivial, almost vulgar, figure in portions of her narrative, and there is very little evidence in this story that she ever really loved Wordsworth at all. There is some special pleading, of course, in the story, and nothing is done or said, except in political matters, by this young Wordsworth that would have offended the somewhat smug and prosperous Stamp Collector of Rydal Mount. Mrs. Woods, however, is much too clever to make the mistake that is usual with novelists in her situation; she does not make a thinker into an incredible man of action, turn a philosophical poet into a D'Artagnan; Wordsworth here shows both courage and great powers of endurance (both of which he certainly had, as we know), but even when he is rescuing Annette or turning back and entering the burning Chateau to look for her money, he acts as we imagine he would act, slowly, doubtfully, and not with the dash and precision of a romantic man of action. Indeed, if the writer has a fault in her conception of the poet's character, it is that she sees the young man of twenty-two in the light of the middle-aged man whose chief characteristics we know so well, the solemn and somewhat priggish sage of Grasmere. But most

stories of this kind, though they may be amusing for an hour or so, are so manifestly ridiculous that they are beneath discussion, and it says something for Mrs. Woods' imagination and craftsmanship that she has created a story in which a great literary figure is the principal character and not only given us some capital reading but also given us something worth discussing.

The second novel on the list also takes us to France, but it is the history of a Franco-American alliance. Jane—their stranger—is a large, full-blooded, idealistic American girl, who has been brought up in a typical small township, and is married off by her very rich and very foolish mother to an impoverished, decadent little French Marquis. This disastrous marriage is nothing but the clash of two worlds, one very old, bloodless but very intelligent, the other new, raw, but healthy; and as Jane is the solitary representative of her world, she suffers and loses, notwithstanding her splendid fight. The first half of the book is related directly by Jane's crippled brother-in-law, the only person in the family who tries to understand her and comes to like her; and this first part is more closely woven, more analytical and quieter in tone, more convincing, than the second half, which has the same narrator but is really Jane's own story, as she told it to him, at second-hand. Here, the writer, whether deliberately or not it is difficult to say, relinquishes her close hold upon every situation, aims at bigger, more dramatic effects, and a more picturesque romantic atmosphere, and is, as I have said, less convincing. Jane is well done, but the real interest of the book does not centre about her or her marquis; it lies in the forceful presentation of a whole social scene, in the way in which a whole world is built up, or rather, the two worlds of the Faubourg and the little "hometown." It has been called a *tour de force*, a phrase that critics always turn to when they really dislike a work of art but dare not say so, but Miss Borden does not appear to be one of those persons of energy and talent whose chief asset is their ability to hurl all their goods into the front window at a moment's notice, but rather a writer who has something like a genius for surveying, easily but effectively, a wide scene and a crowd of actors and giving significance to every movement to and from the wings. It is more than likely that she has stories to tell that will dwarf this present one, good as it is.

Selma Lagerlof was the first woman member of the Swedish Academy, which awarded her the Nobel Prize in 1909. *Herr Arnes Penningar*, which has now been translated into English and translated very well, was written and published twenty years ago, and is one of her most popular stories; it has even been filmed. She spent her childhood in a province in which the folk tale still flourished, and no reader of this little story of the sixteenth century can fail to remark the influence that the folk tale has had upon her work. The story is that of a great crime, the murder of an old priest and his household, and the discovery and capture of the three criminals through the agency of two young girls, one a ghost, the other the lover of the chief criminal. The narration is exquisite in its simplicity and the manner in which certain details, the howling of a dog, the touch of a cold hand, the phenomenal freezing of the sea that prevents the murderers leaving the country, and so forth, are placed here and there in the narrative like little spots of light. That curious concreteness which marks so much Scandinavian writing is here combined with a most delicate feeling for touches of pathos and horror. This translation has the original illustrations with it, and is admirably printed.

J. B. PRIESTLEY

LITERARY HISTORY AND CRITICISM

THE ELIZABETHAN STAGE. By E. K. CHAMBERS. Clarendon Press.
4 vols. 70s.

THE YOUNGEST DRAMA. By ASHLEY DUKES. Benn. 8s. 6d.

VICTORIAN POETRY. By JOHN DRINKWATER. "People's Library."
Hodder and Stoughton. 2s. 6d.

A POPULAR HISTORY OF ENGLISH POETRY. By T. EARLE
WELBY. Philpot 5s.

YEA AND NAY. By various authors. Brentano's. 6s.

MORE than twenty years ago Mr. E. K. Chambers conceived the idea of writing a little book on Shakespeare. That book has never been written, and now, he says, it never will be. It has nevertheless a certain existence, a certain reality, even a certain chance of being immortal. For it was the first cause of Mr. Chamber's immense and exhaustive researches into the origins of the English theatre. The Shakespearean project sent him back to the mediaeval stage; and in 1903, by way of prolegomena, he published his great work on that subject. Now twenty years later, he issues a work twice as large on the Elizabethan stage up to the death of Shakespeare. It is, as he himself remarks, perhaps a pity that he did not extend his views to include the whole period up to the closing of the theatres. But we must be grateful for what we have been given, a corpus of research, information and argument, which is truly extraordinary. No doubt many of the opinions advanced by Mr. Chambers will be in time superseded. Some are doubtful now: and all our views on the Elizabethan drama and on Elizabethan literature in general are in a state of flux. But it does not seem likely that the time will ever come when a substitute for the result of Mr. Chambers' labours shall have been produced by the most industrious of scholars.

Of this work it is not possible to give any full or even adequate description here. It may be mentioned that the "List of Authorities" fills thirty-seven closely printed pages. And, if it had been the object of the author to write a compact and shapely book, it might be just to object that he has been somewhat generously inclusive and discursive. His opening section on the Courts of Elizabeth and James contains a good deal of matter which is not strictly relevant to his subject. But his aim has been to run no risk of excluding anything which might be useful to the student, for whom primarily the book is intended. And even the general reader, if he is not needlessly frightened away by a certainly daunting underbrush of foot-notes and appendixes, will find in browsing through these four volumes a great deal to interest him, as for example, the engrossing chapters on "The Quality" and "The Actor's Economics" in the first volume. Nor is it only scholars who will find use for Mr. Chambers' elaborate catalogue of the Elizabethan dramatists—which, by the way, contains the unobtrusive but uncompromising statement that "Bacon was not a writer for the public stage." On the various controversial points raised by Mr. Chambers, such as the much-

vexed question of the construction of the Elizabethan playhouse, nothing can usefully be said here; but on all of them a wealth of evidence is presented of the utmost value to all enquirers.

Mr. Ashley Dukes's book looks almost like a sketch for a contemporary catalogue on the lines of that made by Chambers for the Elizabethans; but since he takes the whole world (or nearly the whole world) for his province and races through fifty dramatists in under two hundred pages he cannot attempt to be so thorough. Several years ago he was almost the first of English critics to look past the outstanding figures of Ibsen, Hauptmann and Brieux at the state of the drama in Europe. Since then a new generation has risen; and the writers of whom he then treated, most of whose names were then new to English readers, appear here again, with others, in a preliminary chapter called "The Forerunners." In this chapter, lack of space compels him to be briefly epigrammatic and sometimes less than just. The last word about D'Annunzio as a dramatist has not been said when one has said that "this airman indeed never falls to earth, but he soars into the empyrean with all the facility of journalism." When he comes to the younger men, whom he divides into "Realists," "Comedians," "Expressionists" and "Poets and Historians," he describes them at greater length but in a similar style. He analyses his subject by bombarding it with epigrams as the physicist disintegrates a nitrogen atom by bombarding it with radium particles. The result is nevertheless a series of vivid and informative pictures.

Mr. Dukes is perhaps a little too uneasy in face of anything which he fears may be old-fashioned. There is timidity as well as injustice in his decision on M. Charles Vildrac that "this sage belongs properly to the theatre of Dumas and Sardou; but how reluctantly young France lays him on the shelf!" There is injustice too (and to the reader) in the complete omission of M. Jules Romains and M. Henri Ghéon. But Mr. Dukes performs again throughout the whole book the highly useful and amiable function of presenting foreign dramatists to the reader in such a manner as to awaken his curiosity. His sketches of Herr Fritz von Unruh and Herr Ernst Toller and M. Georges Duhamel are admirable in this kind. And his two and a half pages on *Hassan* make a little masterpiece of critical gusto.

Mr. Drinkwater reacts almost with violence and I dare not say without justice from the patronising manner in which most modern critics treat the age of Queen Victoria. He goes on to a comparison of the persons who are shocked when Tennyson's *Galahad* says:

My strength is as the strength of ten
Because my heart is pure . . .

And those who are shocked when Mr. Masfield's *Saul Kane* says:

I'll bloody him a bloody fix,
I'll bloody burn his bloody ricks . . .

But, though Mr. Drinkwater has a good many sensible remarks to make on the content of Victorian poetry, these do not make the most interesting part of a suggestive and altogether excellent essay. He has wisely avoided any kind of catalogue or tabulation, but has sought the main characteristics of the period wherever they are to be found—chiefly, of course, in Browning and Tennyson, to a lesser degree in Swinburne and Arnold and Morris. He approaches his subject with the main idea that in the Victorian age our poets first began to be affected and their styles to be conditioned by the weight of all the poetry that

had been written in English before them. This proves to be in Mr. Drinkwater's hands a very valuable idea; and he succeeds in throwing valuable lights on the diction of Browning and Tennyson. He does not cease to be valuable even where he most violently provokes one to conflict. I cannot in the least agree with his argument that the word "gorgeous" in the lines.

There's heaven above, and night by night

I look right through its gorgeous roof

is a "mere counter taken lazily from the fingered stock of prose." Still less can I agree that "magnificent" is a word of preciser and fuller meaning and that it would have been well if Wordsworth could have said "the magnificent East" instead of "the gorgeous East." But it is a point well worth thinking over; and Mr. Drinkwater's book is full of such points.

Mr. Welby is not particularly controversial or original. Indeed he strikes the attention most when he exaggerates some elderly conventional opinion, as in saying:

For it is the distinction of the nineteenth century, not only in this particularly romantic part of it, say, 1790-1825, but throughout its course, that its genuine poets scarcely ever attempted things contrary to the real nature of poetry while they attempted almost everything accordant with it.

He tells us that Keats "is the perfect type of the artist in poetry" and reminds us that he advised Shelley "to load every rift with ore." "The art of Tennyson," he says "went chiefly into a kind of finish, which is admirable but often seems to me the result of a final glossing or burnishing of an intrinsically not very precious substance." Bolder than Mr. Drinkwater (who, to speak plainly, funks it) he approaches George Meredith and says just what he might have been expected to say. This book might be useful to young and eager readers who want some help in co-ordinating their reading. They should beware, however, of taking over their opinions from Mr. Welby as he, apparently, has taken over most of his from preceding writers.

Yea and Nay, which consists of a series of lectures and counter-lectures delivered in aid of the London Hospitals, is not wholly, but mainly, about literary subjects. Under such conditions, no lecturer could be expected to speak very profoundly but all seem to have spoken very entertainingly. Mr. Wells and Mr. E. B. Osborn argue about history, principally from the standpoint of liking war or disliking it. Miss Rebecca West and Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith, discussing a very mysterious question "Is there any alternative to the sex-novel?" suffer the same fate as Mr. A. G. Gardiner and Mr. Philip Guedalla in wishing to disagree and failing. Miss Edith Sitwell argues that her poetry must be good because there are critics who dislike it and there were critics who disliked Keats's poetry and Keats's poetry is good. Mr. Gosse, who was in the chair on that occasion, and Mr. Noyes, who was to oppose Miss Sitwell, are not reported. The reason is alleged that there was some failure in reporting arrangements; but I suspect that neither Mr. Gosse nor Mr. Noyes could think of any effective comment on this syllogism.

EDWARD SHANKS.

BIOGRAPHY AND MEMOIRS

CARLYLE TILL MARRIAGE. By D. A. WILSON. Kegan Paul. 15s.

LETTERS OF THOMAS CARLYLE TO JOHN STUART MILL, JOHN STERLING AND ROBERT BROWNING. Edited by ALEXANDER CARLYLE. Fisher Unwin. 25s.

MADAME VESTRIS AND HER TIMES. By CHARLES E. PEARCE. Kegan Paul. 16s.

WHEEL-TRACKS. By E. Æ. SOMERVILLE and MARTIN ROSS. Longmans, 12s. 6d.

MEMORIES OF FOUR CONTINENTS. By LADY GLOVER. Seeley Service. 16s.

CARLYLE Till Marriage is in many ways a pathetic book. The author has two great qualifications for the task: enthusiasm for his subject and an almost merciless industry. The labour is obviously one of love and his mission to show "the slump in Carlyle which has disgraced us for 50 years." Mr. Wilson need not worry. No author, as a great critic reminded us, is ever written down except by himself, and Carlyle's tenure among the immortals is a freehold.

Carlyle's overwhelming influence on contemporary thought was not surprising: his message was fresh, and his style deliberately adopted (as this book reminds us) to arrest attention, for long compelled it, but gradually people got rather tired of being arraigned in so resonant a tone, and the time came when, most unfairly, his German sympathies did him harm.

Then your seer is always vulnerable. The irony of life decrees that we are all apt subconsciously to suffer from the defects of our antipathies. "Quite shortly" is the slogan of the bore. There is no tyranny like liberty enthroned, and when George Eliot rewarded Daniel Deronda for his sympathy with the Jews by revealing the secret of his birth the psychology would have been better had she made him an anti-semite, so no one ever preached the doctrine of silence in more volumes and with greater gusto than Carlyle.

Mr. Wilson, being a Scot, is *ex officio* combative; but the legend of a despised and spitefully used Carlyle has really no foundation. Opinions may differ and legitimately differ with his point of view and method of expression; but the man himself stands out a great and splendid figure. The world of letters contains no finer story than his long fight against early disadvantages of education, constant ill-health and poverty, and his sturdy refusal to yield to the temptation, almost the necessity, of giving anything but his best.

It is a great mistake to try to aggrandise your hero by depreciating his fellows. Poor Froude is accused of starting "a carnival of obscenity" and described as "a flustered thief," also "an English clerical variety of Tartarin of Tarascon," and "a blend of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza"; and because he reprints a youthful poem he is compared to "a son of Noah who exposed his father drunk," and even accused of being a bore which was certainly not a Froudian failing. All this is very poor stuff. Froude's *Life*, if it had been written to-day would have created no stir. It merely marked a return long

overdue to the candid biography. No one who has read that wonderful account of Jane Welsh Carlyle and her husband can fail to have his respect for both sensibly strengthened.

Mr. Wilson's attitude to Jane Welsh is difficult to excuse. She is presented as a village coquette, flirting with anyone who came: but it is not only Mr. Wilson's judgment that is at fault. He has no sense of proportion. We are told

When I returned in 1912 the materials available would have filled 50 volumes of the common kind. I have allowed myself 10 years to reduce it to a readable size.

Unfortunately he has not succeeded. It takes over 400 closely printed and not very coherent pages to get Carlyle married. Seven pages are devoted to the fact that his father once saw Burns, several to the pointless discussion of whether he wrote love letters to Margaret Bannerman. As it is the book recalls its author's national dish. There is plenty of fine confused reading in it, and we can only wish him the success his enthusiasm and industry deserve.

The short collection of letters to Mill, Sterling and Browning gives a better picture of the man than all Mr. Wilson's researches. Carlyle was that rare thing an—author who wrote admirable letters. His style within a small compass is arresting without being fatiguing; and in the intimacy of correspondence the real kindness and generosity of the man is revealed "deep though they lay" and oddly enough a modesty one could hardly have expected. He writes to Mill

You are right about my style: your interrogatory is right Irony is a sharp instrument, but ill to handle without cutting yourself. I cannot justify, yet can too well explain what sets me so often on it of late: it is my singular anomalous position to the world and if you will, my own singularly unreasonable temper. and later he explains

Besides I have under all my gloom a genuine feeling of the ludicrous; I could have been the merriest of men had I not been the sickliest and saddest. Thus stands it. One feels this is true, and a great deal of his intolerance and irrational vehemence is explained by the nervous irritability and impatience of incessant ill-health.

The most dramatic letters deal with the burning of the MSS. of the first volume of *The French Revolution*. The editor rejects the theory that Mrs. Taylor burnt the MSS. out of pique. Carlyle, who could often seem petty in the face of trifles, rose supreme. *The French Revolution* was his first great effort: there was only just enough money to outlast the publication which was to establish his reputation and save him from the drudgery of the Magazines—and in a night the work of months was destroyed, for

That I can never write that volume again is indisputable; singular enough the whole earth could not get it back, but only a better or a worse one. His courage is amazing: he thinks more of Mill than himself. In his first letter he writes

My dear Mill, how are you? You left me last night with a look which I shall not soon forget. Is there anything that I could do or suffer or say to alleviate you? For I feel that your sorrow must be far sharper than mine—your's bound to be a passive one.

With what delicacy he shows he has not lost hope—

I have ordered a Biographie Universelle thus far from giving up the game you see I am risking another £10 in it. Courage, my friend That I can write a book on the French Revolution is (God be thanked for it) as clear as ever. and asking for a book of reference

Go make some search for it I know will be a kind of solace to you.

The letter ends

Thanks to Mrs. Taylor for her kind sympathy. May God guide and bless you both!
That is my true prayer.

Could anyone have sent such a message, with a guilty heart?

But perhaps the finest thing of all was his offering his freshly written chapter for Mill's consideration, who dare not take it.

Madame Vestris and her Times takes one into a different world. Somehow books about the stage are never as interesting as they sound. It may be the better the actor the less there is to give out. After all, the best add nothing, they only reflect and illustrate the ideas of others. Madame Vestris, who was the daughter of Bartolozzi, the famous engraver and R.A., lived a spoilt child of the public through four reigns, and married eventually a comedian equally popular, Charles Matthews, who was still acting in the late seventies. If Mr. Pearce's touch is rather heavy for his subject, he gives us plenty of gossip and scandal of an interesting period of stage history. Her first husband was hardly a success, but she proved not inconsolable, and after several amiable distractions was apparently very happy with her second, with whom she had much in common, including mutual improvidence. Her popularity was not surprising. The book shows she was not merely an admirable actress, but a manager far ahead of her time in taste and judgment. The author does not overstate his case when he says of her work "If any member of the dramatic profession can be singled out for honour as one who never ceased to work for the advancement of the stage in its best aspects, that honour unquestionably belongs to Eliza Vestris."

If *Wheel-tracks* may not be the best of Miss Somerville's books it is as one would expect full of agreeable reading and it is ungracious to criticise a writer to whom we owe so much, but it is a trifle patchy. It is odd to come across an account of the storming of Delhi told by the writer's uncle who took part in it, and very well told too, in the midst of a book of Irish life. Like all such records, there is always present the underlying melancholy of a hopeless situation. The Irish are a nation of politicians in which everyone wants to be in the cabinet; but as the author says "A combination of youth and the Irish temperament does not make for political prescience," though an old farmer did tell her in 1894 " Well, they'll get Home Rule in the latter end and when once they get it, they'll be ateing each like tigers."

Memories of Four Continents includes the Leeward Islands, of which Lady Glover gives us the most fascinating account. It is by far the best thing in the book, which would have been all the better for revision. We are told the author bought a blue pencil when beginning to write these reminiscences—"it will be worn to a stump before I have finished." She should have bought another, and the irritating phrase "to a mere women this seems etc," might not not have appeared quite so often, and a rather pointless story about a telegram and the Ulster rebellion perhaps not at all.

CHARTRES BIRON

TRAVEL AND ADVENTURE

TALES OF TRAVEL. By LORD CURZON OF KEDLESTON. Hodder and Stoughton. 28s.

LETTERS FROM A DISTANCE. By GILBERT CANNAN. Martin Secker. 10s. 6d.

BY INTERVENTION OF PROVIDENCE. By STEPHEN McKENNA. Chapman and Hall. 7s. 6d.

PALESTINE AND MOROCCO. By SIR MARTIN CONWAY. Edward Arnold. 16s.

TUTANKHAMEN AND OTHER ESSAYS. By ARTHUR WEIGALL. Thornton Butterworth. 15s.

THE TOMB OF TUTANKHAMEN. By HOWARD CARTER and A. C. MACE. Cassell. 31s. 6d.

A NATURALIST AT THE POLES. By R. U. RUDMORE BROWN. Seeley Service. 25s.

THE MARQUESS CURZON OF KEDLESTON is a traveller after my own heart. He travels to some purpose. He does not sneer at "mere guide-book information" (which is generally very useful and inspiring information), but likes to find out all he can about the places he visits, and to find it out, if possible, before he gets there. This is what your emotional traveller, more concerned with himself than with his surroundings, calls "the tripper spirit." Some people go to Venice in order to see Venice, some in order to see themselves in Venice. Lord Curzon belongs to the former class, Mr. Gilbert Cannan to the second. Lord Curzon's appetite for strange sights is Elizabethan, while Mr. Cannan's preoccupation with his own emotions may be classified as Georgian. Yet it is a distinction without a difference—or it ought to be. Whistler's version of a London fog may be more interesting than the fog itself, but it was only produced by looking at the fog carefully. An impression of Venice will be of little value without knowledge, but knowledge is mere lumber if it has failed to produce any personal impression. The point is that the reader of travel literature—and no kind of literature has a steadier public—generally finds the impressions of the better-informed traveller the more readable of the two.

Observe Lord Curzon's method. On his way to visit St. Helena in 1908, he "made a careful study of every available work about Napoleon's residence in that island," having indeed provided himself with "a miniature library" on the subject. He landed and went to Longwood. The French Consul was showing a party round and had just pointed out what he called "the reception room." "Excuse me," said Lord Curzon's voice in the background, "this was the billiard-room." Whereupon the Consul gracefully retired and Lord Curzon took the party round instead. A little later he discovered the billiard table itself, stowed away in an unused room at Plantation House, Sir Hudson Lowe's former residence. Nobody on the island, British or French, was aware that it had belonged to Napoleon. In 1899 Lord Curzon went to Lucknow and was shown the tablet marking the spot where Sir Henry Lawrence died; he said that it

was in the wrong place, and, on enquiry, it turned out that he was right, though the tablet had hung there unchallenged for fifty years. But Lord Curzon is more than well informed. He has made a special study of two or three particular subjects, much discussed among travellers, and has evolved his own theories about them. One is the so-called "vocal Memnon" of Thebes, the colossal statue which puzzled Greek and Roman visitors to Upper Egypt by the strange sounds that issued from it, until it suddenly fell silent for ever in the third century A.D. Lord Curzon deals with the question exhaustively, and concludes that here was no trick of the priests, but that the sound "was in some way or other due to the expansion in the stone of which the base was composed, brought about by the sudden rise of temperature at dawn." It ceased when the statue was repaired. Another of his subjects is the "singing" or "musical" sands, to which I have frequently referred here. He discards the easy Victorian explanation that all the travellers, from Marco Polo down, who said they heard these sounds, were liars, and that the whole thing was "superstition." These strange sounds, which some have compared to breaking harp strings, others to trumpets or drums, have a great body of evidence behind them, which Lord Curzon has collected or classified. I notice only one omission: he does not mention Kinglake's "Church bells," which the author of *Eothen* heard in the desert sands beyond Jordan. Lord Curzon distinguishes between the "singing sands of the desert," chiefly to be found in Asia, and the musical sand beaches, which have been reported from other parts of the world. He offers scientific explanations—connected with the rubbing together of the grains of sand—which are too long to quote here.

One of Lord Curzon's chapters deals with the Victoria Falls. I refer to it only to point a contrast. For Mr. Cannan also has a chapter headed "The Victoria Falls," the opening words of which are: "Shameful, shameful, shameful!" You know that he cannot mean that the Victoria Falls are shameful; and sure enough you find that he is referring to the Tory party—or rather to the Imperialist wing of it, who have created our "ugly" Empire, and done "obscene things" in its name. Mr. Cannan hardly mentions the Victoria Falls; they did not interest him; what interested him and inspired this chapter, were the English newspapers that reached him while he was there. I should have made much the same comment on Mr. Stephen McKenna's book, which contains a great deal that has nothing to do with the islands of the West Indies which he visited; but Mr. McKenna tells us in advance that he does not care a fig for the opinions of reviewers, with their "air of magisterial authority." So I will just state quite humbly that I am grateful for what he says about the West Indies, but that his essays on Dr. Johnson and R. L. Stevenson and on books in general leave me cold—and that not only on the score of irrelevance.

Sir W. Martin Conway, on the other hand, as befits an experienced traveller, states the object of his journey clearly and sticks to it. He went to Morocco and Palestine—those strange, facing-both-ways countries, with Europe and the sea in front of them and the desert at their backs—to see how the French and ourselves were dealing with them, The French have made the better job of it, he thinks. They had the advantage of starting with a clean slate, for they found Morocco almost untouched; and they learned much from our mistakes in Egypt. They did not attempt so introduce parliamentary government among the Moors. Better still, they did not disfigure the country with modern buildings of the Western type, but invented of set purpose a new Franco-Moorish style of

architecture which Sir Martin Conway praises unreservedly. The building material is reinforced concrete, whitewashed, and the roofs are flat or covered with glazed blue pantiles; there are friezes of coloured Moorish tiles, and arcades opening on to gardened or paved courtyards. In Palestine the strongest impression of the past is "not of Hebrew or Roman, Byzantine or Saracen, but of the Crusaders." How true that is! Perhaps though Sir Martin Conway makes no such suggestion—there is a suitable field for a Gothic revival here. But the old East is disappearing, even in Morocco. "Trousers are winning," in fact, and soon the red *tarboush* will be the only relic of ancient costume in the Near East. "It was like a blow in the face to me to read on a large board the notice 'Ten miles speed limit through Nazareth' and to hear the horns honking at the well by the corner where once the Virgin Mary came to fill her pitcher." But it cannot be helped. "We waste time and energy in repining. Let us rather help to fashion the new in the best shape we can." A most charming and provocative book.

Archæologists are among our most adventurous travellers nowadays. The thirst for knowledge has driven them out of their studies into the prairie and the desert, armed with picks and shovels, and revolvers too, sometimes. Here is a further instalment of the saga of Tutankhamen's tomb. Mr. Carter gives a straightforward official account of the business, illustrated by those wonderful photographs which we have already admired in the *Times*. He has little to add to the technical information already made public; but he lets himself go in a vigorous chapter on the visitor nuisance, which enables us to understand why no ordinary visitors are to be allowed inside the tomb this year until the middle of January. Mr. Weigall's style is much livelier, and he gives us a vivid little picture of the scene in the ante-chamber on that great occasion when Mr. Carter removed the stones which blocked the entrance to the sepulchre hall. His other essays are equally good; but unfortunately I had read a good many of them before in an earlier work of Mr. Weigall's, *Travels in the Upper Egyptian Deserts* (Blackwood, 1909). Mr. Weigall has gutted that little book pretty thoroughly. One of its chapters was reproduced in *The Glory of the Pharaohs* which he published early this year. The remaining six—no less—are coolly reprinted in the present volume without acknowledgment or explanation of any kind. The publishers, no doubt, have come to some arrangement satisfactory to themselves, but they might have had the consideration to warn the public. Perhaps Mr. Weigall does not realise that there is a large section of the general public which reads, and has always read, his essays on Ancient Egypt. He ought to be proud of the fact, for it is more than any other Egyptologist can say. In *A Naturalist at the Poles*, Doctor Rudmore Brown gives a sympathetic account of the career of the late Dr. W. S. Bruce, who was admittedly one of the highest authorities of his time on Polar exploration, but suffered from a constitutional modesty which, while endearing him to his friends, severely handicapped him as an explorer, and prevented him from receiving the public recognition and support which he deserved.

CLENNELL WILKINSON

POLITICS AND ECONOMICS

LORD SHAFTESBURY. By J. L. HAMMOND and BARBARA HAMMOND. Constable. 12s.

THE PROSPECTS OF INDUSTRIAL CIVILIZATION. By BERTRAND RUSSELL (in collaboration with DORA RUSSELL). Allen and Unwin. 7s. 6d.

QUESTIONS OF THE HOUR. By VISCOUNT MILNER. Hodder and Stoughton. 7s. 6d.

ECONOMICS OF THE HOUR. By J. ST. LOE STRACHEY (Editor of the *Spectator*). Hodder and Stoughton. 7s. 6d.

THE THEORY OF SOCIAL ECONOMY. By GUSTAV CASSEL (Professor in the University of Stockholm). (Translated by JOSEPH McCABE). 2 vols. Fisher Unwin. 42s.

THE LETTERS OF THE TSARITSA TO THE TSAR, 1914-1916. (With an Introduction by SIR BERNARD PARES, K.B.E.) Duckworth. 18s.

CITIZENSHIP. By W. H. HADOW (Vice-Chancellor of Sheffield University). Oxford University Press. 6s.

HOUSING (The Facts and The Future). By HARRY BARNES (Chairman of the Housing Committee of the Independent Liberal Party in the House of Commons, 1918-1922.) Benn. 25s.

MR. & MRS. HAMMOND'S *Lord Shaftesbury* is another admirable study in a field where *The Village Labourer*, *The Town Labourer* and *The Skilled Labourer* had already shown them supreme masters. In those three books they depicted with consummate skill the new England that was being fashioned by the industrial and agrarian changes between 1760 and 1832. In this one their scope is necessarily rather different; they are still dealing with evils that came in the train of the industrial revolution, but the story must centre round the efforts of their hero to combat these evils and, of course, it covers a later period, since Shaftesbury began his public life as Lord Ashley, M.P. in 1828 and died in harness in 1884. I have used the word "hero," but I do not imply by this that the Hammonds idealise Lord Shaftesbury. They are, in fact, plainly unsympathetic to this dour, self-torturing, aristocratic, Evangelical, but they are, I think, always just. They know how to appreciate his qualities as well as to criticise the defects of them, and they conclude their account of his fight for the Ten Hours' Act with a high tribute to his courage and his patience.

The long and bitter struggles that he waged for the factory children, for the miserable slaves in the coal-mines, for the chimney-sweeping boys and for the victims of a brutal lunacy system, are told in detail. In these humaner days the violence and callousness of the opposition seem incredible. Not only the meaner and more ignorant sort of oligarch like Lord Londonderry, but men of higher character and liberal principles, fought desperately for their vested interests or their mistaken economic principles. We find Lord Brougham sneering at "the advocates of misplaced and perverted humanity," Cobden and

Bright using arguments that stink of hypocrisy. But Shaftesbury, too, had his blind side. He told the farmers of Dorset in 1841 that "the cry of cheap bread was both absurd and wicked"!—though it is only fair to say that he changed his mind and made amends for this in later years.

But Mr. and Mrs. Hammond are not mere chroniclers; the reader will find that this book is a brilliant piece of character drawing. Shaftesbury was a man drunk with the Bible. His fanatical religious tenets were implanted in him by his nurse, and to the end of his life they obtruded themselves in all his public activities. He made himself absurd in his quarrels with the Puseyites and the Neologians. He referred to Seeley's *Ecce Homo* as the "most pestilential book ever vomited from the jaws of hell." He believed that science would verify the Mosaic creation and establish the authenticity of Noah's ark. He could argue, in favour of appointing an Indian to the post of astronomer's assistant at Bombay, that "this man by contemplating thus the purity of Almightyness, will soon learn to despise Brahma and Vishnu. Who knows, but what he might become an Orpheus to his compatriots?" He got Sunday posts abolished (temporarily) in 1850; he defeated proposals to open the British Museum and the Crystal Palace on Sundays, and he drove Sunday bands out of the Parks. Yet his piety did not dry up his genuine humanitarianism; he never thought, like so many of his fellow Evangelicals, that the next world was everything and this world nothing. And it was his religion that was the secret of his fine perseverance as a social reformer. His real weakness was his innate conservatism. This was not a mere sentiment, but the patrician's deep-rooted mistrust of democracy. He hated Socialism and Trade Unionism as he hated Popery. He was cold, to put it mildly, towards popular education; he was content, as the Hammonds say, to leave England to the "Ragged Schools." It was these that absorbed the main part of his energies in later life, and turned his pity and love for mankind, his self-sacrifice and his devotion to duty, into the narrow channels of a patronising philanthropy. But the last word on him must be one of praise:

Everyone who compares the tone of the world of wealth and leisure when Shaftesbury died with its tone when he entered Parliament will count among the causes the example of his noble life; his success in softening in the manners of his age, as he had softened in its politics, the savage logic of the Industrial Revolution.

Mr. Bertrand Russell is a man who, as Bacon said of Aristotle, "hath his oare in many waters," and a voyage with him in this particular sea is an exciting adventure. He offers us, from the standpoint of an internationalist and a Socialist with anarchistic leanings, a searching and provocative analysis of our modern civilisation. The world, as he sees it, is torn by a titanic conflict between four great powers—Capitalism and Imperialism, Socialism and Self-determination. These are discussed at length both in the abstract and the concrete, and from the discussion emerges the conclusion that what is important at the present time is not the class-war, the struggle between Capitalism and Socialism, but the struggle between industrial civilisation and humanity. The thing we call "industrialism" is, indeed, accepted by Mr. Russell as inevitable; but what he will not accept is a mechanistic conception of society. And his central problem, therefore, is to find how "to combine the uniformity and large-scale organisation which industrialism demands on the material side with diversity, individuality and spontaneity in the non-material aspects of life." I cannot see that he has

found the solution—or, at any rate, he has not got it over the footlights. The true value of his book does not lie in its constructive proposals ; there it is weak and vague and occasionally, as it will seem to many of those who want what he wants, definitely wrong. Its merit is that it is a constant stimulus to thought. Mr. Russell is a remorseless critic who will force any honest reader to face facts, or the illusions that commonly do duty for facts, and he has the advantage, too, of being the master of a brilliant pen. It is a pity that he should sometimes, in a fit of malice or affectation, let his pen run away with him, and introduce flippancies and exaggerations into a work that is fundamentally sincere.

The Socialist will, no doubt, say that Lord Milner and Mr. Strachey, in their discussion of various current problems of economics and finance, are, as compared with Mr. Russell, only scratching the surface of things ; the anti-Socialist will probably commend them for dealing with realities instead of fancies. But, however that may be, they are both important men with definite points of view—points of view that have to be reckoned with. Mr. Strachey can, I suppose, be fairly described as a Liberal-Conservative. He has no personal axe to grind in his defence of capitalism, he has genuine goodwill for the working class, and he is broad-minded enough to open the columns of *The Spectator* to “the other side.” Some of his criticisms in these industrial essays are, no doubt, just ; but his opponents will doubtless regard him as the benevolent bourgeois in the pulpit. Lord Milner, on the other hand, lays claim to more advanced views on social questions. He would go a long way with measures of reconstruction carried out on socialistic lines—the application of the Social Betterment principle he calls it. But he has large reservations. He does not like “internationalism,” and he fears that Labour in this country has inherited Liberalism’s indifference, or hostility, to the Empire.

The Letters of the Tsaritsa make pathetic and rather tedious reading. There are four hundred and four of them, all written in English (the Tsaritsa, it will be remembered, was the daughter of Princess Alice of England, and was brought up largely at Queen Victoria’s Court), and all exceedingly intimate—sometimes to the point of fatuity. They are a jumble of personalities, small chat, family joys and troubles and high politics. They throw very little light on Russia in general, for the Imperial Court was notoriously out of touch with Russian popular life and even with the aristocracy. What the Tsar and his wife knew about their country seems to have been mainly derived from the wrong people—reactionary officials or rogues like Rasputin. In all the history of despotism there never was a pair more unfitted for their position than these two poor creatures. The importance of the Letters, as Sir Bernard Pares says in his excellent Introduction, is that they are a mine of information on the crisis that ended in the overthrow of the Empire.

I have no space to deal adequately with Professor Cassel’s solid work. Though it suffers somewhat from having been written before the war, it is a notable contribution to economic thought. Every economist must be interested in—even if not convinced by—Professor Cassel’s bold attempt “to do away with the whole of the old theory of value,” his examination of the trade-cycle (which it is absurd, by the way, to call, in an English translation, “the conjuncture movement”) and the monetary theories that have made him famous.

C. M. LLOYD